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New Statesman

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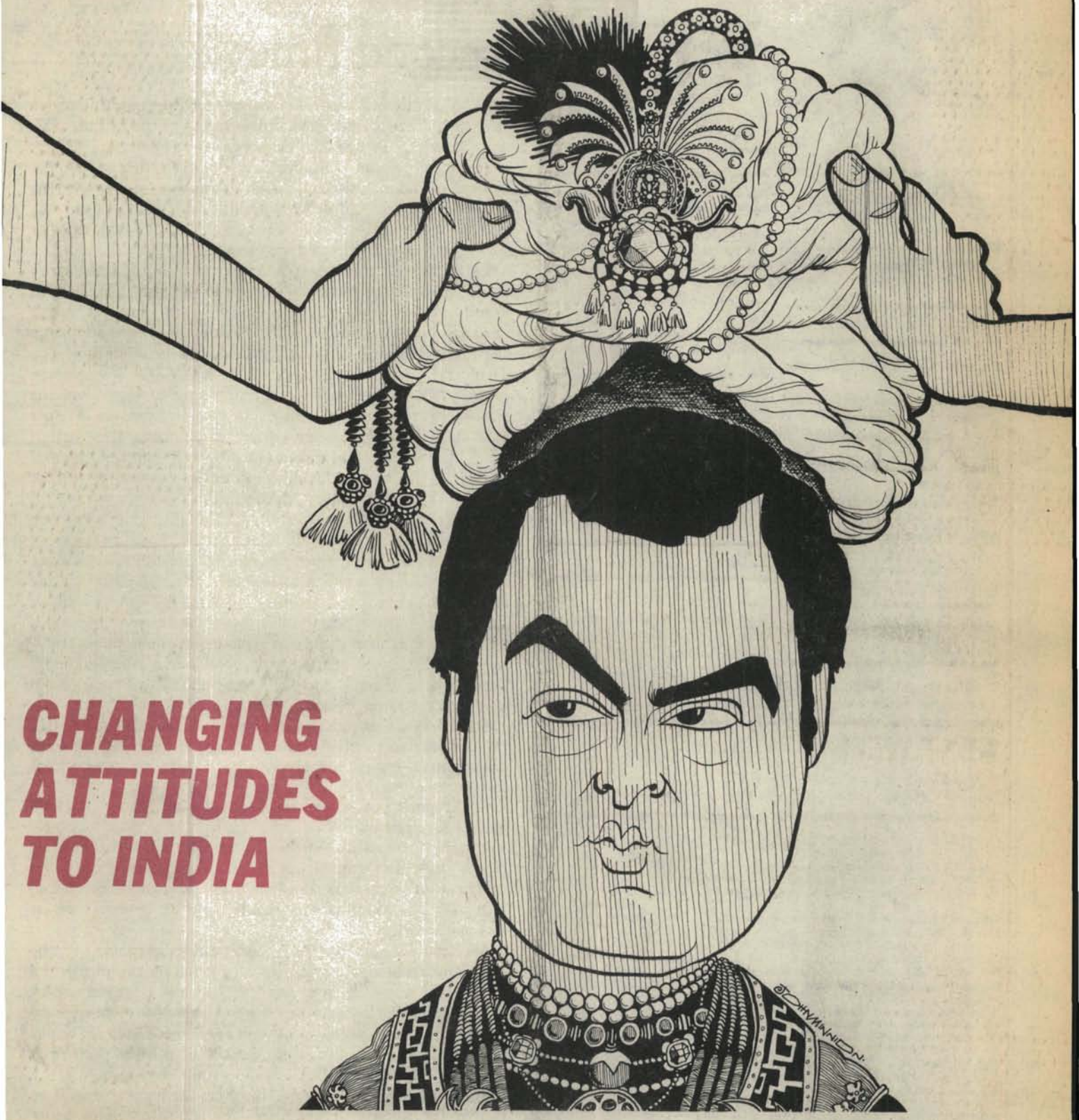

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO INDIA

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

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The old actor wins a second time

FOR ALL the coverage that it has had, the Reagan phenomenon is still very hard to understand from this side of the Atlantic. The most sweeping Presidential victory in terms of electoral college votes since Franklin D. Roosevelt's second election in 1936 has gone to an old man without a clear political programme, or any very clear political idea, whose political instincts appear very illiberal and whose world view has seemed wholly dominated so far by ideologically directed ignorance.

Let us, though, at least search for such silver lining as there may be to the cloud of another four years of Reagan. The election results were clearly a personal victory for the President, rather than part of a general swing of the whole of the United States into the realms of partly batty, partly dangerous right-wingery. The Democrats even made some gains in the Senate. The White House signally failed to change the complexion of the Congress, with the usual 'coat tail' effect on the ballot box performance of other candidates in the President's party. If anything, the Senate's ability to resist Reaganite adventurism — for example in Central America — has been positively improved in comparison with the results of the 1982 midterm elections.

President Reagan is also likely to find a tougher attitude towards the Middle East in the new House and Senate. A marked feature of the results seems to be the way in which the Jewish vote swung to Mondale. Exit polls indicate that it split about 70-30 against the President. The renewed identification of the Jewish vote with the Democratic party appears to have been a reaction to the way in which the 'Christian issue' was exploited by the Republicans — the blatant mixture of right-wing politics and bible-thumping fundamentalism and the talk of Armageddon that Reagan, Bush and their supporters endorsed.

Then again, perhaps Mondale as president would have proved a rapid disappointment. At least President Reagan and the team about him have made enough mistakes, particularly in the area of foreign policy, in the last four years to have had something to learn from. Mondale's utterances, on the Middle East, or on Nicaragua and El Salvador were not exactly much cause to hope for a new beginning there. And Mondale might have felt constrained to have a phase of toughing it out with the Soviets in order to prove that he wasn't soft on 'American interests'; or to make even more concessions to the military in order to show that he wasn't soft on national security.

At least Reagan has had four year's experience of the voraciousness of the American military-industrial complex — and he has done his ritual shouting at the Russians. It is even said by his apologists that he has at last come to a realisation of the urgency of arms limitation negotiations with the Soviet Union. If this is indeed the case, he is in a stronger domestic political position to make positive progress than Mondale would have been.

President Reagan, of course, has a credibility problem, if he really wants to be an arms limiter. The way in which the cruise and Pershing missile deployments were handled last year has left an enduring and understandable impression in the Kremlin that talk of limitation is cover for actual increases. The Russian

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military-industrial complex is also strongly entrenched.

There are two little telltales that would indicate whether the President is serious over arms limitation, or not. If Richard Perle remains the Assistant Secretary of Defense with responsibility for international security policy and General Edward Rowney remains the head of the US team at the START talks in Geneva, then the United States government is not being serious about any negotiations. If they get replaced it might be. □

MacGregor becomes the fall guy

'HE CAN'T be worth it' was the headline on the *Daily Telegraph's* leading article in May 1980, when Sir Keith Joseph — then at the Department of Industry — announced the terms on which he had persuaded Mr Ian MacGregor to become chairman of the British Steel Corporation. The normally loyal *Daily Torygraph* reported that 'incredulous laughter and protests from Labour, Tory and Liberal MPs greeted the announcement of the terms'. Mr Jonathan Aitken, the Tory backbench MP, denounced the 'Gilbert and Sullivan complexity of the deal'.

In the face of this onslaught, Sir Keith responded lamely that MacGregor was a 'good investment' — the very phrase that Mr Nigel Lawson used four years later to describe the £2 billion plus that the current coal dispute has cost the taxpayer.

The detail of Sir Keith Joseph's Gilbert and Sullivan deal and its current state are set out on page 4. We still don't know the total sum that the taxpayer will have paid to a New York bank for the chance to employ this supposed management genius, but it could end up at over £3.3 million — roughly half for becoming chairman of British Steel at the age of 67 and the other half for becoming chairman of the National Coal Board at the age of 70. It would be a rare pleasure to see Joseph and Lawson, respectively responsible for the two contracts, grilled by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee for having misspent such sums on a man who Mrs Thatcher once, with naive hyperbole, describes as 'a man with the best track record of any industrialist in the metallic industry in the world'.

Mrs Thatcher's infatuation with MacGregor is now well and truly over. For less than a tenth of the price it would have been possible to get a more competent British industrialist to do what MacGregor has done over the past four years. In any case, the government was simply taken for a ride by Lazard Freres, Mr MacGregor's New York bank. No such 'transfer fee' payment would be made to an American bank or company, making a temporary loan of an executive to the US government — even for one of pre-retirement age, let alone for one already in his late 60s. But Mrs Thatcher let it be known that she wanted MacGregor and only MacGregor, first at steel and then at coal, and so Lazards coolly conned million pound fees out of the British taxpayer — not once, but twice. Nice going.

BUT IF IN 1980 and 1983 Mrs Thatcher demonstrated infatuated credulity about the supposed genius qualities of her metallic Supermac, she is now unfairly trying to dump him with responsibility for the national disaster that the coal dispute has become. The wave of publicity that has been given to his mishandling of the hiring of Eaton and the firing of Kirk, to his dictatorial manner with colleagues and employees, to his inability to communicate effectively on television — all these obviously correct objections to the man's style of management were, first, well known in advance and, second, concentrate only on the form and not the content of the policy being pursued towards the coal industry and the NUM.

For MacGregor was hired by the government to do a job at coal, which rightly or wrongly Mrs Thatcher and Mr Lawson thought the existing NCB management would be unwilling, or unable, to perform. Since before the 1979 election Mrs Thatcher has wanted to avenge the miners' victories of 1972 and 1974 over the Heath government. (Her determination redoubled after David Howell forced her to retreat over an earlier, lesser pit closure programme in 1981.) Her plan has been to lessen the country's dependence on coal and to do battle with Arthur Scargill on terms and at a time of the government's choosing — when coal stocks were high, the rest of the trade union movement demoralised and when the police were ready to take on mass picketting.

In a short, sharp confrontation, the plan supposed, Scargill's avowedly revolutionary leadership would be discredited with his members, a settlement could be had with 'moderate' elements, led perhaps by Heathfield or McGahey, Nottingham would split and form a new union, the drift back to work elsewhere would rapidly turn from trickle to torrent. That was the plan. The details may have been MacGregor's, but the strategy was unequivocally Thatcher's.

The resistence and cohesian of the miners has defeated that strategy. Despite orchestrated headlines about major cracks in the NUM, the drift back to work remains a trickle, costing more to police than it produces coal. In the end the dispute *will* end with some combination of negotiation and drift back to work (and Scargill's asinine Libyan venture has weakened the NUM's position internally and externally). But even this government would not have embarked on the policy, if it had been told then that the resulting dispute would last over nine months, would cost the taxpayer well over £2 billion, would involve the creation and mobilisation of a national police force and, even if put through in full, would not produce net savings for the nation until into the next century.

The policy was the Prime Minister's. So the failure is the Prime Minister's. MacGregor is just the ageing and expensive scapegoat. □

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'TACTFUL' GO-SLOW ON MacGREGOR BSC FEE?

THERE ARE indications that the announcement of a final 'performance related' payment for National Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor's prior three-year stint as chairman of British Steel is being delayed — lest it be seen as a spectacularly ill-timed 'pat on the back' for MacGregor at a time when the NCB management is in chaos. DAVID VINCENT reports:

A FIVE-MAN committee has been meeting this year to decide what part of a £1,150,000 'performance related' fee should be paid for Ian MacGregor's time as chairman of British Steel from 1980 to 1983. It hasn't yet told the government what it thinks, though the payment was supposed to be made in two stages — part this year, part in 1985.

Sir Keith Joseph when at the Department of Industry was conned into agreeing to pay Lazard Freres, the New York bank where MacGregor was and still is a partner, a two-part fee for agreeing to release him for three years. Part one was £675,000 'up front'. But part two depended on his 'performance' — up to £700,000 payable this year and up to £450,000 in 1985.

How much would in the event be paid was to be decided by a committee of five — two nominated by Lazards, two by the government, with a neutral chairman. It consists of:

- John Gardiner, chief executive of the Laird Group and a veteran of Labour's old Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, as chairman
- Albert Frost, finance director of ICI until his retirement and now a director of several companies, including Marks and Spencer and British Steel itself (where he is chairman of the audit and salaries committee)
- Lord Weir, chairman of the Weir Group and a director of the Bank of England
- John Knox, former head of Whitehall's accountancy services
- and Gordon Manzie, second permanent secretary at the Department of Trade and Industry.

The Gardiner committee has ludicrous terms of reference. In deciding how much of the £700,000 this year and the £450,000 next year should be paid to Lazard Freres it has been told to take into account what happened under MacGregor to BSC profits, measures towards privatisation, the health of the corporation (including the morale of the workforce) and the effective employment of BSC's assets. MacGregor's contribution (or lack of it) under *any* of these heads is necessarily almost entirely subjective.

MacGregor himself doesn't get any direct cut from these fees to Lazards (any more than from the £1,500,000 that Nigel Lawson when Energy Minister agreed to pay the same bank in 1983 for a further three year contract at the National Coal Board).

But MacGregor remains with the partnership on undisclosed terms, which would include partnership fees and pension arrangements. He also insisted on maintaining his connections with the American metal and coal mining group Amax, where he was chairman and chief executive for eleven years to 1977. ●

AT last! On 7 November Heseltine went before the Commons enquiry — to news that *Conqueror*'s logbook has gone 'missing'

David Smith

Pleas to Home Office about the 'Muppet House'

IN THE TWO WEEKS since the Women in Prison Support Group (WIP) held a demonstration outside the Home Office to publicise conditions at the C1 Psychiatric wing, HMP Holloway (known to prisoners as the 'Muppet House'), 17 incidents of self-mutilation involving nine women and three attempted hangings involving two women have been confirmed by the Prison Department.

The demonstration on 26 October followed a spate of incidents on C1 in which two inmates gouged an eye out (one attempt successful, one not) and a third tried to cut off her breast. This last woman, Maggie Gill, told a WIP representative that she had done it 'to get out of my cell for a few minutes.'

Demonstrators put up posters and handed out leaflets across the street from the Home Office. WIP delivered a letter to Leon Brittan protesting that mentally ill women are being locked up when they should be sent to secure psychiatric hospital units. This claim follows a study by Stewart and Shine of the Holloway psychology unit stating that as many as 73 per cent of the women on C1 'should not be here', and the admission by court officials that Tina Evans, 18, was put there because there wasn't the money or the resources to accommodate her elsewhere.

Given the lack of alternative care facilities, WIP has asked the Home Secretary to intervene. It requests that Brittan

- visit C1 unannounced (to avoid the blatant clean-up operation conducted prior to journalist Polly Toynbee's visit on 28 September)
- set up an independent enquiry.
- engage registered mental nurses (of which there are none at present) to care for the women
- install padded protective cells on the wing
- ascertain why Holloway alone (until two weeks ago) keeps no figures on self-mutilation
- and provide NHS care for C1 inmates.

A Holloway prison official, who remains anonymous due to Official Secrets Act entanglements, confirms WIP allegations that C1 staff aren't adequately trained to deal with the psychiatric problems on the wing. The official says that understaffing results in lock-ins up to 23 and a half hours per day, that the wing is being used as a dumping ground for the entire women's prison system in the UK, and that inmates from other wings in Holloway are sent to C1 for punishment purposes — known as 'getting C1s'.

Prisoners from adjacent wings say they can't sleep because of screaming and head-banging coming from the wing night and day.

A representative from Mind (National Association for Mental Health) who was at the demonstration said that the organisation was 'alarmed' about the inadequacy of care on the wing and the 'conflict of care and security' which wouldn't arise if the system catered to mentally ill cases separately from normal prison sentences.

Mind has drafted a letter to Lord Elton, Minister of State for the Home Office, expressing its 'grave concern' over reports of isolation and prolonged detention, inadequate food, light, and exercise opportunities, self-mutilation, and the high incidence of drug use (based on its own 1982 figures). Mind has also called for an independent enquiry and suggested that it's time to reconsider whether the prison medical service should be placed within the mainstream of the NHS.

Rumours from the Home Office indicate that it's concerned about the bad publicity surrounding Holloway Governor Joy Kinsley's regime (she has been reputed to tell inmates that 'punishment is nourishment'), especially as Jeremy Corbin, MP, continues to put questions before the Commons regarding C1 and its inmates.

'Trained' — or not?

A spokesperson for the Home Office told Capital Radio in a broadcast that went out during the demostration that it 'accepted the fact that there was a judicial problem with the sentencing' of mentally ill persons, but that the staff on C1 were all 'properly trained' in psychiatric care and the inmates receive a 'great deal of caring'. WIP challenged him on the air to verify the claim.

The argument over what 'properly trained' is, how much a 'great deal of caring' constitutes, and whether these words are being used by the Home Office with reference to prisoners or patients and therefore to custodial or medical care, continues to rage on.

In the meanwhile, the Prison Department reports that, after a delay of several years, 260 places in secure units run by the DHSS are now available in the London area for the courts to send mentally ill persons. The suggestion that this facility was inadequate to handle transfers from the C1 wing met with no response.

The Prison Department has also been unable to explain adequately why figures on self-mutilation at C1 are suddenly being recorded and made available.

Susan Hayes

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RESEARCH CHALLENGE TO LAWSON ON WAGES

THE GOVERNMENT'S claim that workers can 'price themselves into jobs' is contradicted by the evidence of the past five years according to research by an economist at Warwick University. Since 1979 average male manual weekly pay has only kept pace with inflation, while unemployment has gone up from 5 per cent to 13 per cent of the workforce. JOHN RENTOUL reports

MOST STRIKING is the period from 1980 to 1982, when manual weekly pay dropped sharply in real terms, while unemployment rose most steeply (*see graph*). Chancellor Nigel Lawson's claim last week that a 1 per cent cut in the average level of real earnings would create up to 200,000 jobs contrasts with a 6 per cent cut in manual earnings in 1980-82 accompanied by the loss of 1¾ million jobs.

The research, by Steve Dowrick, shows quite clearly that the relationship between manual workers' pay and unemployment is the *opposite* of Lawson's model. As wages are reduced, unemployment goes up. Partly this is because workers have less money to spend and so demand falls, putting people out of work. Partly it is because the connection works the other way round: as deflation bites harder, unions are weakened and all workers have to accept lower wages. Neil Kinnock was quite right to say last week: 'The only way that people price themselves into jobs is to price other people out of jobs.'

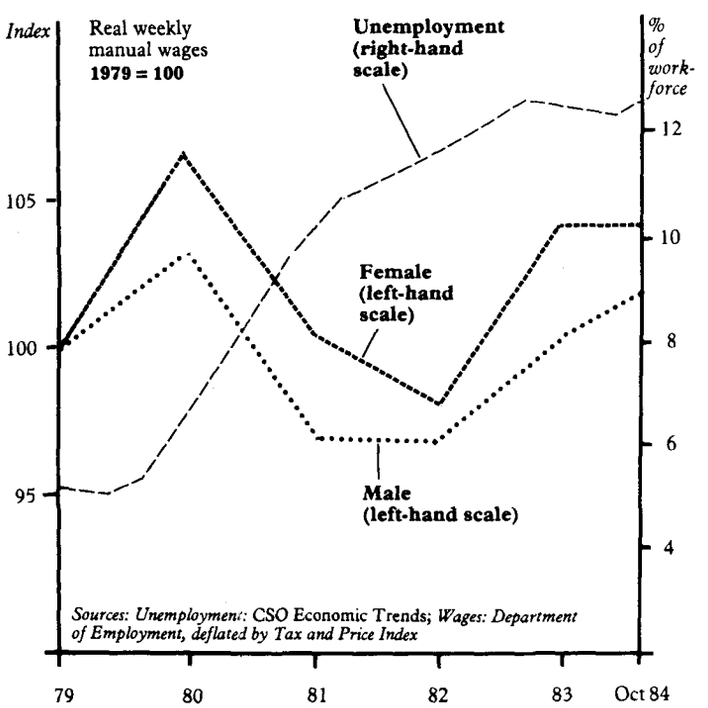
Dowrick's research reveals what has really been happening to the distribution of income over the past five years. Britain's gross national product — the size of the national 'cake' — is currently about the same as in 1979. What has changed is the size of different shares of the cake: a shift to those with non-manual jobs and to company profits.

Profits have leapt from a trough of 3.3 per cent in 1981 to 5.7 per cent last year and 7.0 per cent for the first half of 1984.* 'Pricing people into jobs' is the spurious justification for a further transfer of income from workers to employers. ●

Looking Glass theorist Lawson

**Real rate of return on assets of industrial and commercial companies before tax, Bank of England (revised from Quarterly Bulletin September 1984; first half of 1984 figure estimated).*

Wages & jobs: Spot the connection



Sources: Unemployment: CSO Economic Trends; *Wages: Department of Employment, deflated by Tax and Price Index*

MISCELLANY

Sweet Mr Walden

Here's your chance, Brian Walden, to abuse as an idiot a schoolteacher in Hackney. It's what you want to do. Do it. First the presenter of *Weekend World* in his column in the *Standard* on 16 October: 'I think it quite likely that I shall abuse the next idiot who comes up to me to whine about some allegedly monstrous abuse of civil liberties caused by the Old Bill stopping a couple of blokes to ask them what they are doing'. Now the teacher in Hackney, who tells us this tale: on 26 September 'my 19 year old son was walking home through Regents Park at midnight with two friends. A police van without lights drew up and two policemen jumped out and "frisked them", and then made them empty their pockets. I had given my son an unsigned Euro-Cheque card which a friend had accidentally left at our house, which my son was planning to return to him that evening . . .' You've guessed it, experienced readers. Albany Rd nick locked the kid up, wouldn't phone the owner of the card, finally phoned the mother at 4 am. 'I am finding it extremely difficult' writes the mother and teacher Susan Willock — Mr Walden please note — 'to convince my son that the Metropolitan police believe they are behaving in his best interests by providing this kind of "protection".'

Be warned . . .

A new demarcation line, it seems, is being established on the Left, or at least asserted by that section of it which flocked to the Left Alive *conference at London's City University last weekend. Out go 'hard Left' and 'soft Left' or 'sectarians' and 'soggies'; in comes Fundamentalism (aka hard Left, Stalinists, Militant etc) versus the Enlightenment (erstwhile soft Left, libertarians, eurocommunists, unaffiliated socialists etc). 'Enlightenment' was a persuasive self-definition for almost 3,000 people who turned up to the event, organised by* Marxism Today, *for it was virtually boycotted by those castigated as 'Fundamentalists'. The vanquishing of puritanism was celebrated in a number of the sessions, which ranged from a discussion on style — those uncertain of the status of their jeans hovered anxiously outside the door — to a hard working discussion on the role of the market in a socialist economy. Best attended sessions were those in which Ken Livingstone, darling of the people, debated with Beatrix Campbell, and Tony Benn with Stuart Hall. After praising the visionary aspects of Livingstone's work at the GLC, Campbell took him to task for consorting with the wrong sort of person, eg the unreconstructed vanguardist Tariq Ali, for which she received a standing ovation from at least 12 people. Other star attractions were Angela Carter on literature and David Yip, who spoke on Images of the Left.*

. . . times is changing

Left Alive drew many more people that the 1,700 who turned up for its predecessor of 1982, the *Moving Left Show*. This was despite (or because of?), the diminished level of active promotion by the Communist Party. And it succeeded in breaking away from the atrophying hand of the generation of '68 — which had helped kill off the old Communist University of London — and attracted many more young people and women. There were, however, almost no black people there, a testament to the paucity of sessions on black politics, but also to the failure to invite black speakers for more mainline sessions. The Communist Party raised funds to provide free entrance for 60-70 miners.

Ana Gram follies (5)

Inside every celebrity there's definitely an anagram struggling to get out. Readers have shown it with Neil Kinnock ('I knock Lenin'), Roy Hattersley ('The Tory Slayer'), Gerald Kaufman ('A UK red flag man'), and Michael Meacher ('Rich male, me ache') — what? — and now Denis Healey. In Healey you found no less than 45 anagrams. Indeed a Blackheath anagrammarian was so carried away that even after she'd sealed the envelope with her thoughts she added one on the cover: 'Heady? senile?'. Oh dear. Labour councillor Pat Haynes, ex-Mayor of Islington, offers 'Enid eyelash', and Gerard Morris of Teddington the very Christmassy 'He leads ye in'. Noting Denis's passion for photography, Betty Parker of Didcot proposes 'I had lens eye'; while his relations with the Leader are examined in David Hutchinson of SE3's 'Has eyed Neil' and Stuart Skyte of W5's 'Had Neil's eye'. Stuart Skyte adds 'yes, it IS a silly comp!' which we can't deny. Indefatigable Mark Sievewright gives us 'Diesel hyena'. If you can stand the strain, Peter Shore next. We'll have a whole Cabinet of them yet.

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EUROPE TO HASSLE USA OVER AGENT ORANGE

A GROUP of British Labour members of the European Parliament have tabled a 'motion of resolution' which calls on the American government to compensate Vietnamese victims of its chemical war, in keeping with a pledge at the Paris peace talks to pay reparations to Vietnam — a pledge that has never been honoured. JOHN PILGER reports

THE MEPs, who include Alf Lomas (London North East) and Stan Newens (London Central), will ask the European Parliament to put again the request for compensation to Washington.

On 14 November there is to be a meeting in the Grand Committee Room of the House, of Commons, booked by Ernie Ross MP (Labour, Dundee West) which will discuss this European initiative. Speakers will include Dr Alistair Hay, who was to have been a principal witness in the case for the American victims of Agent Orange [*the herbicide 245-T or trichlorophenol-oxyacetic acid*] and Dr Paul Noone, consultant microbiologist at the Royal Free Hospital.

What they will have to say is made especially urgent in the light of current attempts in the United States and this country to re-write the history of the Vietnam war as something other than a sacrificial war of rampant, experimental technology against a peasant people.

The principal poison of the chemical war in Vietnam was dioxin, which causes foetal deaths, miscarriages, chromosomal damage, congenital defects and cancer. Dioxin is contained in 245-T, still used legally in Britain as a weed killer, and known as 'Agent Orange' in Vietnam.

Between 1961 and 1971 the Americans dropped almost 4,500,000 pounds of herbicides on Vietnam, much of it Agent Orange. Many American veterans returned home with a variety of cancers and their children were often born with horrific birth defects. After a long struggle for compensation they received this year, out of court, a settlement of 180 million dollars. Vietnamese victims received nothing.

Dioxin can only be destroyed at temperatures as high as 800 degrees centigrade. It remains with its lethal potency in nature for a long time, in soil and in water for up to 20 years. In southern Vietnam alone 43 per cent of the cultivated land and 44 per cent of the forests were affected.

In a report to the US Senate in August 1970, Senator Gayland Nelson admitted that 'The US has dumped (on southern Vietnam) a quantity of toxic chemicals amounting to six pounds per head of the population including men, women and children'. Estimates vary a great deal; one says that two million Vietnamese were contaminated. During visits to Vietnam since the war, I found the sight of a child with a thalidomide type deformity not uncommon in the villages.

In 1970 the large hospital at Hung Vuong in Vietnam reported a 'foetal catastrophe'; out of 5,870 births, 47 had produced deformities reminiscent of those caused by thalidomide.

This wasn't news at the time, although it was one of the early signals of the cruellest legacy of the longest war this century: the devastation of people not with bombs and shrapnel, but with an unseen poison which would continue to kill and deform after the war was over, perhaps for as long as a generation.

It's the victors who usually write the history of wars; in the case of Vietnam, it's the losers and their consorts who now seek to convert a nation and its people to mere abstractions in the vocabulary of the Cold War.

Of course, that process of concealment of what was really done in Vietnam began long ago. I recall that in 1967 the response of the American military in Saigon to a protest by American scientists about the use of Agent Orange was to change the name of the 'defoliant programme'. It had been called, appropriately, 'Operation Hades'. This was changed to 'Operation Ranch Hand'. ●

Mike Goldwater/Network

Quyen (r), whose father fought in South Vietnam and was sprayed, has microcephalia — her brain is smaller than a monkey's

**Further information is available from Dr Joan McMichael, Medical & Scientific Aid for Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, PO Box 100, Bedford Chambers, Covent Garden, London WC2. Telephone: 01-836 1350.*

Liverpool

Fur flies as Tony Byrne races on . . .

IN A HOUSEBUILDING crusade the likes of which hasn't been seen since the post-war housing boom, Liverpool City Council is set to start construction of 1,400 new homes this year. Added to the 1,069 it began in 1983 — first year of the new Labour regime — the council is set to reach half its five-year target of 5,000 new homes six months early.

But in its increasingly single minded approach the council has:

- committed virtually all its housing investment money to the new build programme to the detriment of repairs to existing council housing
- signed away contracts to private builders without detailed specifications and for land which hasn't been cleared of tenants, let alone buildings, although work is supposed to start by 31 March
- withheld planning permission from housing associations because they wanted to build above the second floor, which is against the council's new rules
- and built housing below widely accepted minimum standards.

The bizarre granting of open-ended contracts to private builders gives an insight into the workings of a council where, it's alleged, power is increasingly concentrating in the hands of a small number of councillors, led by a power behind the throne, Tony Byrne, chair of the Finance Committee.

The contracts were signed late in September in an effort to beat a widely-expected announcement by Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin putting an end to all new housing capital expenditure during the current financial year. In fact, Jenkin shied off, merely recommending councils to show 'voluntary restraint'.

However, Liverpool, in common with several other authorities, signed contracts to ensure money was committed before the feared ban could be imposed, often with no details of the schemes outlined.

The important decisions relating to housing in Liverpool aren't taken these days, it seems, by the council's housing committee, but in a variety of small working groups and sub committees — an incomprehensible web going by unenlightening names such as the 'performance review and financial control sub-committee', whose decisions are then passed to the housing committee, often 'for information only'.

The master plan target of starting 5,000 new homes in five years concentrates on 17 areas earmarked as the most deprived. 5,000 flats will be demolished to make way for them and no new homes will be started outside those areas.

The approach is based on what the council sees as universal rejection of accommodation in flats by council tenants, and so all the new homes will be semi-detached houses with a height limit of two storeys. To be built to special council-approved specifications, often adapted from the builders' own models, these will be well below the Parker Morris standards which were the minimum allowable for council housing before the Tories abolished them.

For example, the 3 bedroom/5 person narrow frontage house proposed is 13.4 per cent below the Parker Morris standard. Independent housing experts have criticised the design, finding that the living room was 'very long and narrow', two of the bedrooms too small, and that there was insufficient storage space.

The determined approach by Liverpool council means that there's little room for any housing to be provided by any agency other than the council itself. For instance, at a meeting on 27 September its development and building control sub-committee turned down planning permission for over 350 new housing association units because they didn't meet the two-storey criterion.

The council is also seeking to impose a 'nomination' requirement on housing associations above the normal 50 per cent, and to require associations to take its nominations (from the housing list) regardless of whether these follow an association's own requirements.

The high rate of council refusal of association schemes means that the Housing Corporation, which allots funds to associations will underspend its Liverpool budget and accordingly have to divert resources to other districts in the Merseyside area.

Tony Byrne strongly defends his policies, however. Speaking to the *New Statesman*, he argued that they're in response to need: 'In terms of the contracts, we did nothing that other authorities hadn't. We're simply providing as much housing as possible. We don't have an absolute line on standards but try to provide the best we can.'

He points out that over half the waiting list of 12,000 consists of single people and that the council is trying to meet that need. Indeed, it hopes to become the first council in Britain to offer a home to all homeless single local people who approach the council for housing.

Christian Wolmar

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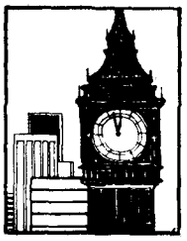

PETER KELLNER

Revealed: how sex influences politics

TIME WAS when one purely pragmatic argument could be made for denying women the vote: that, until 1979, there would then not have been a post-war Conservative government. In every general election from 1945 to 1974 more men voted Labour than Conservative; only in the last two general elections have a plurality of men voted Tory.

Even today, the gap has not closed. Last week's MORI poll in the London *Standard* found that the Conservatives' nine-point lead was comprised of a 14-point lead among women, but only a three-point lead among men. This 11-point divergence between men and women has varied little over the past 40 years.

In America things are the other way round. The way to have stopped Ronald Reagan becoming President four years ago would have been to deny *men* the vote. Had the choice been made by women alone, Jimmy Carter would have won a second term of office, and probably be spending this week watching his Democratic successor being elected. As it is, the commanding leads enjoyed by Reagan throughout the campaign have been due to a consistent lead of 20-30 points among men; women have divided far more equally between the two candidates.

Why the difference — why should women have more progressive political loyalties in the United States, but men have more progressive loyalties in Britain? Or, to set the question in a more dynamic context, is the Labour Party missing out on an international trend for women to set the pace in progressive political attitudes? In Australia, for example, one of the achievements of the Labor Party during the past decade has been to close the gender gap: in next month's general election, for the first time, it is likely that Australion women will vote Labor in the same numbers as men.

The first point to make is that in every industrialised country — even the US, where the gender gap is widest — differences in attitudes involve only a minority of people. Polls that showed men dividing 60-40 for Reagan, while women split 50-50, were in fact demonstrating that 90 per cent of men and women possessed the same range of choices — 50-40 for Reagan. The difference came with the last ten per cent on each side, with men voting Reagan and women voting Mondale.

Even so, the gender gap is important for two reasons. The arithmetical reason is that most elections — in Britain at least — are won and lost by narrow margins among small groups of voters. Last year's general election was the first since 1945 in which the gap between Labour and Conservative was more than eight points. The second, more principled, reason is that even modest differences in loyalities between groups may conceal fundamental social forces. Since men and women are distributed almost equally in the population by geography, class, age and family background, *any* divergence in social and political attitudes is worth exploring.

Looking at recent polling evidence, the main conclusion to be drawn is that the apparently greater progressive instincts of British men concern a narrow but traditionally dominant set of 'socialist' issues, mainly to do with work, unions and the State. But on many issues that have little or nothing to do with class struggle against monopoly capitalism — from social policy to cruise missiles — women tend to be more progressive than men.

AMONG BOTH men and women, conventional socialist attitudes have declined in the past 20 years. But, as a recent Marplan poll for Channel Four's *A Week in Politics* showed, such attitudes remain more common among men. Thirty-seven per cent of men agree that 'the government should control the investment decisions of banks and insurance companies more tightly than it does', compared with 26 per cent of women. And 34 per cent of men — but only 20 per cent of women — think trade unions should have more say in the way industry is run.

One progressive social policy that appeals to women more than men is government spending to ease unemployment. Harris Research Centre's study, 'Britons observed', for the *Observer* found that working women were significantly more sympathetic than working men to the idea of paying higher taxes to allow greater government spending on job creation (women divided 42 per cent for, 50 per cent against; men divided 60-35 against).

In non-economic areas there is also evidence that women, at the margin, tend to be more progressive than men. The same Harris survey found that while women divide two-to-one in favour of homosexuals having the same rights as heterosexuals (56 per cent in favour, 27 per cent opposed), men tend to be more lukewarm to the idea (53 per cent in favour, 37 per cent opposed).

A more recent Harris/*Observer* poll uncovered significant differences in attitudes to Ulster and the IRA. It found that, while the sample was evenly divided on whether Ulster should remain part of the UK, men tended to favour the link (45 per cent in favour, 36 per cent against), while women, by 44 to 34 per cent, wanted the links broken.

An even sharper difference appeared when interviewees were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: 'Any attempt to solve the Northern Ireland problem must have the co-operation of the IRA'. Only 37 per cent of men agreed, while 57 per cent disagreed. Among women the response was: 46 per cent agree, 41 per cent disagree.

Perhaps the most widely noted 'gender gap' issue has been cruise missiles; women are substantially more hostile than men to their presence in Britain. At the height of the debate last autumn, shortly before the missiles arrived, a MORI survey found a five-point majority among men in favour of allowing the missiles into Britain, compared with a 29-point majority among women against. That 34-point gender gap is the largest, as far as I am aware, that any poll has ever found on any major political issue. A recent Marplan poll found that the gender gap has narrowed, but at 19 points it remains significant. (The gap does not extend to attitudes towards Polaris; Marplan's poll found women slightly more likely than men to agree that Britain is safer keeping its own nuclear weapons.)

Looking at these widely varied facets of the gender gap, it might be thought that the role of men and women, at work and at home, would produce the most striking gender differences. Not so. Despite the fact that women at work have jobs that pay, on average, 25 per cent less than men, all polling evidence — including a survey by MORI for the *New Statesman* four years ago — finds that the same, normally high, percentage of both sexes are broadly satisfied with their own pay levels.

Nor is there any significant difference in attitudes to role reversal. In its 'Britons observed' poll, Harris asked people: 'If more men were to look after the home and children and more women worked as the main breadwinner, do you think this would be a good thing or bad thing?' Both men and women divided by more than two-to-one in believing it to be a bad thing.

Taken together, these findings seem to suggest that there is nothing inevitable or permanent about Labour's particular inability to attract women's votes; rather it is the perception of its 'male' concept of socialism and the roles of unions that puts many off — and simply tagging on to the end of its traditional policies a genuflection to women's rights at work and in the home has done little or nothing to help.

Instead, the party needs to project a wider progressive vision, in which the rhetoric of union-based class struggle is employed less, and in which concerns for liberty, choice, fairness, tolerance, partnership and peace are stressed more. These ought to be self-evident socialist qualities; it is a measure of the ideological gains that both the Alliance and the Tories have made since 1979 that they need restating. For it is not just millions of women's votes that are at stake; many men's votes are, too. □

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THE DEATH OF MISS MURRELL

Last March, a woman who was a 'pillar of respectability' was found murdered near Shrewsbury. No inquest has been held. Judith Cook asks whether there was a political motive

ON 24 MARCH this year the body of a 78-year old woman, Hilda Murrell, was found in a copse just outside Shrewsbury. The first information released by the police to the press was that her house had been ransacked. Later the police said she had been 'sexually assaulted.' No inquest has yet been held.

Both of these police claims turned out to be untrue. If only for lack of any other explanation, the most significant fact about her life, and possibly death, appears to be this: she has been working, up until her death, on a paper on the management of nuclear waste to be read at the Sizewell B Inquiry at the end of the summer. In the end her nephew read her paper, but by then she had been dead five months, and the police were no nearer clarifying the circumstances of her death or catching the culprit.

Miss Murrell is described by friends and family as a pillar of respectability. She was a great conservationist. Politically she supported the Liberals although she had joined TACT — Tories against Cruise and Trident. She was known to be in favour of a nuclear arms freeze though not of unilateral disarmament and to be against nuclear power Her concern led her to educate herself in nuclear physics, and she had read widely and discussed the subject with a wide range of experts. Her paper, read post-humously, was acknowledged to be an excellent exposition of the problems of nuclear waste, without containing any new revelations.

Hilda Murrell: what was her killer looking for?

THE FIRST SIGN that something was wrong was on the afternoon of Wednesday, 24 March, when a farmer discovered her car, slewed on a verge. He did not know it was hers, but its position worried him and he told his local policeman who duly reported it to Shrewsbury police. The car was still there on Friday and he again reported it to the policeman who again reported it to the Shrewsbury police. Had the car been promptly identified as Miss Murrell's, the murder trail could have been started at once. But the Shrewsbury police first failed to follow up the report and said later the wrong registration number had been fed into the Swansea computer.

On the morning of Saturday, 27 March, having identified the car as Miss Murrell's, police began to search the field and copse near the car with a gamekeeper's wife. She found the body, noting that the time put down for its discovery was, correctly, 10.30a.m. Yet the police told Rob Green, Miss Murrell's nephew, that his aunt's body was found much later, and then that it was found at 7 a.m.

Rob Green took voluntary redundancy from the navy a short while ago, having been a high ranking naval intelligence officer with a crucial role in the Falklands war, for which he received a special citation. He does not consider himself a fanciful person. But the series of police errors, and the contradictory information they have given him is now causing him acute concern.

The confusion really begins over the time that the police first entered Miss Murrell's house to see where she was. Shrewsbury police found out it was her car on Friday evening. They say they forced an entry into her house at 6 a.m. on Saturday. But several witnesses say they saw men in her house on Friday night, at least one of whom seemed to be in police uniform. A forced entry would anyway have been unnecessary because her back door was unlocked. The curtains had been drawn and the light left on in the kitchen since the Wednesday of her death.

Police first told the press that Miss Murrell's house had been ransacked. They later told the family this was not the case. Some drawers and cupboards were open but not disarranged. Her house had been carefully searched and her papers gone through but in an orderly manner. Her telephone had been cut off in such a way that while it was dead from inside the house, anyone calling would appear to hear it ringing out. The police agree this is a sophisticated way of doing it but that it could have been fortuitous.

Joan Tate, whose husband Clive founded the local Nature Conservation Trust with Miss Murrell, says that anyone who has mentioned to the police that the murder might possibly have something to do with the work on which Miss Murrell had been engaged has been made to feel 'excessively foolish and a number of people who came forward with different bits of information — it's called co-operation by the public — have been treated offensively.'

It soon became apparent that two sets of police were involved, neither of which appeared to be aware of what the other side was doing as some witnesses were interviewed by both. The local police are working under Detective Chief Superintendent David Cole, brought in from Worcester, who was number 2 on the Lesley Whittle case. The other police would appear to be Special Branch who the local police agree have been involved.

MISS MURRELL appears to have been attacked in her bedroom on the Wednesday morning. She had a lunch date, which she failed to turn up to, and may have gone home unexpectedly to change on her way. She had drawn £50 from the bank and this, along with her brief-case-type handbag, were the only things stolen.

After the attack, its seems she was bundled into her car. It is unlikely that the murderer was local as he would have known he only had to drive half a mile in one direction to reach open country. As it was, he turned the other way, driving through the streets of Salisbury. A witness saw her being driven 'slumped' in the passenger seat. There is more confusion over the headlined 'sexual assault'. When the family pinned the police down for details, it appeared there had not been one. She was partially clothed but this could have been because she

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was attacked while changing. The family has been refused point blank copies of the post mortem report. Rob Green says: 'They said they would answer questions about it but you can imagine our difficulties as since we had no idea what was on it, we did not know what to ask.' When he identified the body he saw a mark of a blow under her eye. There also appear to have been stab wounds but insufficient to kill her. The police say she died of hypothermia.

Rob Green contacted everyone with whom his aunt had been recently in touch. One person he spoke to was Gerard Morgan-Grenville who runs EcoRopa, an ecology research group, in Abergavenny. Mr. Morgan-Grenville made a statement to Rob Green which he later confirmed in writing to the police. He says that on a date he and his wife were pretty certain was 25 February, Miss Murrell rang him. His wife confirms this. As he was in the bath, he wanted to ring her back, but she sounded so agitated that he went to the phone, draped in a towel. Her evident worry concerned him but she would not tell him the cause. However, before she rang off she said: 'If they don't get me first I want the world to know that one old woman has seen through their lies.' He says he had never heard her speak like this before; she was a very reserved woman.

The area around where she lived is now alive with speculation and rumour. Rob Green did not want to press the point until her paper had been read on her behalf at Sizewell. He did not want to detract from its content. But a number of features disturb him. Dates for a resumed inquest have been continually postponed, and the latest, 5 December, is by no means definite. Although the family were told initially that the body would be kept until after the Inquest, in August they were suddenly told by the police they had five days in which to collect it. A second autopsy had been carried out and the Greens were refused a copy of that too. The body was returned in a zinc-lined coffin in August. Police advised her family not to look inside. They complied and it was duly cremated.

Most recently, the owner of the land on which the body was found, a Mr Scott, has stated most emphatically both to the police and the family that he was walking in the copse on the Thursday afternoon after the murder. He had been carefully examining it as it is used as a game reserve. He would, he says have noticed the body of a rabbit, let alone of a person. He swears there was no body there. If he is correct, her body must have been moved after her death. But without accurate details from an autopsy, her family don't know.

A statement made to the *New Statesman* by a police spokesman for the Chief Constable of West Mercia says it has not been possible for the police to reveal all the facts on the case until the coroner resumes the inquest. 'The Inquiry is still alive and being worked upon by a considerable number of detectives and it is hoped that the matter will eventually be tried in a criminal court.'

The police are aware of the various theories connected with Miss Murrell's death but will, they say 'naturally give more credence to some than to others.' They have contacted a number of groups connected with Sizewell to see if they could assist.

THE MOST obvious speculation is that Miss Murrell's house was broken into by somebody who was interested in the paper on which she was working. Although it contained no new information, that was not known at the time. Perhaps someone thought she had other information (having heard of her panicky February phone call) or merely wanted to know what her paper would say. Such a strange break-in is not unique.

In 1980 a senior consultant pathologist, Dr Jenny Martin of Chesterfield Royal Infirmary, announced in *The Lancet* that she would be publishing studies following extensive tests she had carried out on workers involved in the plant at Bolsover where 245T was being made. A report from the company doctor, much quoted by the government when refusing to ban 245T, said the men had suffered no long-term ill effects. Dr Martin's research showed the contrary. Shortly after her summary appeared in *The Lancet*, the surgery attached to her home was broken into and all her research data was stolen. The police never cleared up the case and the work was irreplaceable as she had no duplicates.

Again, did somebody somewhere think Miss Murrell had access to even more sensitive information because of her close links with her nephew in naval intelligence and the very sensitive work on which he had been engaged? Is it possible, in the current climate of paranoia, that it was thought — quite wrongly — he had passed on information to his aunt?

Rob Green admits he just does not know. 'I retain a nagging doubt that her death was connected in some way with her involvement with nuclear power although this may sound far fetched.' He feels that at the very best the way the police handled the enquiries in the early stages seems to have been inept.

Finally the police spokesman says: 'The weight of the evidence in this case appears to show that it was a burglary that went tragically wrong.' On that everybody is agreed. □

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- **Dr Richard Turco**
  R & D Associates, California.
- **Dr Anne Ehrlich**
  Senior Research Associate, Stanford University, California.
- **Professor Mike Pentz**
  Open University; Scientists Against Nuclear Arms.

Additional guest speaker:
- **Georgiy Golitsyn**, USSR scientist.

7.30 pm Thursday 15 November
Lecture Hall, Central Hall, Westminster

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ECHOES OF THE BOMB

Paradoxically, the Brighton bombing has taken pressure off Sinn Fein and allowed it space, writes Mary Holland

Dublin

GERRY ADAMS allowed himself a brief grin as he surveyed the batteries of television cameras and the press tables crowded with foreign journalists who had come to hear him speak at Provisional Sinn Fein's annual conference in Dublin last weekend.

Then he departed from his prepared speech to address his audience in Irish. He reminded them of a story he had often told before of visiting Bobby Sands when he was dying on hunger strike and of Sands saying to him, also in Irish, 'Our day will come'. Gesturing at the massed ranks of the media, the MP for West Belfast remarked to his audience 'This year, it seems our day is coming.'

This was translated for me by an Irish speaking member of the audience so I cannot vouch for its absolute accuracy. But the fact that, like myself, most of the journalists did not know what Adams was saying did not detract from the audience's pleasure.

They knew, as did the speaker, why the journalists were there in such numbers. The press had converged on Dublin's Mansion House last Sunday morning to hear what Adams would say about the Brighton bomb and just how much rhetoric there would be about 'the armed struggle'. Their expectations were not fulfilled. Adams's hour long speech was a low key affair in which he made only one reference — albeit, to the English journalists, an offensive one — to the Brighton bomb and very little to the IRA's campaign. In this he reflected the tone of the conference as a whole which was serious, earnest even, in its deliberations.

If the British and Irish governments had observers in the hall they would be correct to report that neither should be complacent about the political advance of Sinn Fein. For almost the first time that I can remember this conference sounded like a political party in which working-class men and women discussed issues that related to their daily lives instead of a group of fanatics locked into their own past and fighting over arcane points of Republican ideology.

Ironically, it was a bomb at Brighton which made these debates possible. The fact that the IRA had proved convincingly that it is still in business removed the pressure on Adams and the rest of the leadership to keep asserting their undiluted support for 'the armed struggle'. The tensions involved in running a violent military campaign while at the same time trying to build a broad political base remain. But the attack on the Tory Party conference has given the politics time to consolidate.

It is also beginning to look as though the Brighton bomb may have had more widespread political effects which will also help the Provos. Adams spent much of his speech last Sunday attacking the Dublin government's demand to be listened to by London when representing the interests of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. Since Brighton Mrs Thatcher has been meticulous in emphasising that the bomb would not change her attitudes to the government of Dr Garret FitzGerald, nor influence the outcome of the summit meeting she is due to have with him in Dublin later this month. But she has also said, in an interview published in the *Birmingham Post* last week, that the bomb has provided 'the new backdrop to everything we discuss'. If Dublin doesn't represent the Catholic minority, the Provos will.

Conservative Party sources believe that the effects of the IRA attack on the Grand Hotel have been cumulative. On television last week Mrs Thatcher was visibly more shaken by the news of Indira Gandhi's assassination than by the attempt on her own life last month. Some think that it has brought home to her just how she is to the IRA. These reflections are the 'backdrop' to her imminent meeting with Dr FitzGerald.

THE OMENS are not hopeful. It is now accepted in both Dublin and London that the whole process of Anglo-Irish thinking on Northern Ireland has taken several steps backwards in the past couple of months. Towards the end of September there was a mood of quite buoyant optimism, not just in Dublin which always has to try and be optimistic about British intentions, but among quite cautious politicians and officials in London. The publication of the New Ireland Forum Report and the British response to it did seem to indicate that it was at least possible to arrive at a common analysis of the Northern Irish problem and, from that point, to look for structures that could bring political progress.

It was ever possible to discern the elements of a package that might emerge, given adequate political will on both sides. There would be no change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, nor would the Irish government press for a diminution of Irish sovereignty. However, the British would recognise that the only way to overcome the alienation of the Catholic minority from the Northern Ireland state, would be to give Dublin a role in representing the Catholics' interests. This could mean conceding to the Irish government a formal right to be consulted on all matters affecting the North's Catholic minority and might allow for some political presence of the Irish Republic in the North.

If the British were prepared to proffer such radical political change, then Dr FitzGerald's government did not rule out a major *quid pro quo*: the holding of a referendum on Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution which lay claim to Northern Ireland. All this would be fleshed out by much closer co-operation on security, the courts, minority rights etc.

This kind of thinking is still around but its implementation looks a good deal more distant now. Dublin has already steeled itself to accept the fact that no dramatic initiative will emerge from the forthcoming Thatcher/FitzGerald meeting, something which could cost the Irish Prime Minister very dearly on the domestic political front. His advisers remain hopeful that the meeting will leave the way open for the process of reconciliation to continue and would like some declaration of intent which shows that Mrs Thatcher has not closed her mind on the issue.

SHE MAY already have done so. As the time for decision approaches all the ancient arguments for doing little or nothing about Northern Ireland have once again come into play (not to mention immediate problems like the miners' strike which force Ireland down the political agenda). There is the danger of militant Protestant opposition to any Anglo-Irish co-operation, adverse reaction within the Tory party and the Prime Minister's own strongly Unionist instincts which blind her to the reality of Catholic alienation from British rule. 'At the end of the day', one Tory said to me

Predictably, the British press heard only what they wanted to write: that Sinn Fein made no apologies for the IRA. This example from the *Daily Mirror*

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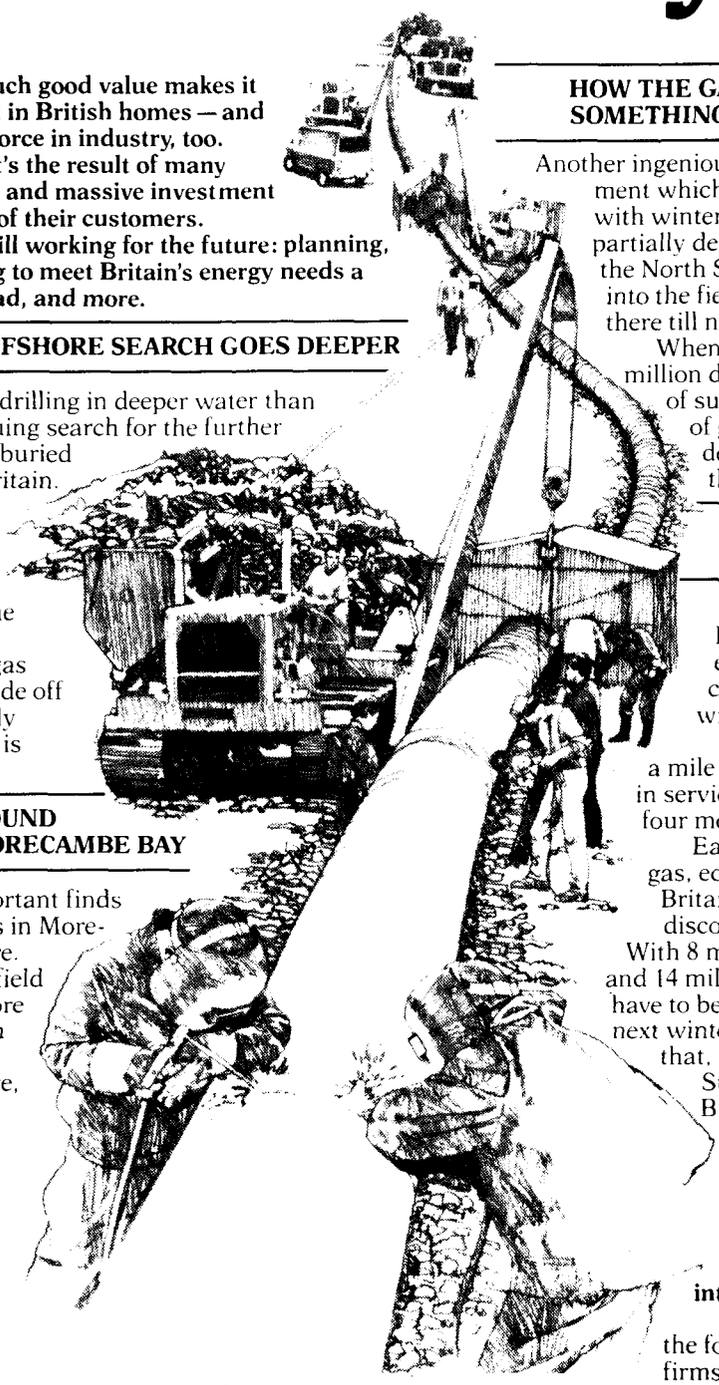

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gloomily, 'she just won't be able to face the prospect of Enoch pointing a finger at her on the Front Bench and hissing "Now we see of what base metal the Iron Lady is made".'

Then there is the effect of the departure of James Prior. In his final days in Belfast it became fashionable to dismiss Prior as a busted flush, a broken minister who, like many before him, had despaired of ever shifting Unionist opinion. But Prior's speech in July in the Commons debate on the Forum Report remains by far the most generous and imaginative British response to that document. Prior specifically recognised that the Irish government had a legitimate interest in Northern Ireland and conceded its right to speak for the Catholic minority. In retrospect it now seems likely that what he despaired of was ever getting the degree of consistent support from Mrs Thatcher that would be necessary to push through political moves involving the Dublin government.

Prior was a political heavyweight whose views could not easily be dismissed either in cabinet or in the Tory party. He has been replaced by Douglas Hurd, an apparently decent and inexperienced newcomer. Already there are disturbing signs that Hurd reposes a great deal more confidence than Prior did in the advice of his Northern Ireland Office civil servants who are traditionally extremely cautious about the reactions of the Unionists to any whiff of change.

Before Prior left, the new phrase about government policy towards Unionism was 'the pursuit of acquiescence'. What this meant was that no Unionist politician could volunteer agreement to policies involving co-operation with Dublin, but that there did exist within the Protestant community a substantial body of opinion which would be prepared to accept change and that this new mood should be exploited. Again one hears a great deal less of that kind of talk now. Indeed, in the two interviews in which the Prime Minister has talked about Ireland since the Brighton bombing she has appeared to insist that consent must be actively forthcoming before she would consider any initiative.

WHAT ABOUT the bomb itself? In theory Mrs Thatcher could use the IRA's attack on her life to explain to the British public that she will not be deflected from pursuing political progress in conjunction with Dublin because that is what the Provisionals most fear. In the immediate aftermath of the attack many people were hopeful that that was exactly what would happen. But what one hears now is that the Prime Minister will not make any political moves which might be interpreted as 'concessions to the terrorists' and that any progress down the Dublin London path would be seen in this light.

The one unquantifiable factor in all this is what influence the Irish Prime Minister can bring to bear, now or in the future, on Mrs Thatcher. Sources close to her say, sometimes with surprise, that she does seem to have a genuine regard for Dr FitzGerald and to trust his judgment. Whether this regard will be enough to persuade her to follow him down the path of Anglo-Irish co-operation, when all her own political instincts seem to be pulling her the other way, is a question which could have historic implications for Ireland. □

RATE CAPPING

RATE OF REBELLION

As the conflict over the powers of central and local government sharpens, Joan Smith reviews the options available to defiant Labour authorities, which they will be discussing next week

NEXT TUESDAY, Labour-controlled councils on Patrick Jenkin's rate-capping list meet to discuss a particularly thorny problem. So far, the 16 authorities have maintained a united front in their determination to defy the spending limits imposed on them. But they now face the daunting task of how to translate that defiance into action.

Easily the most popular tactic at the moment, particularly among south London councils, is that of not setting a rate. This would mean that lower tier authorities, which do not have a legal obligation to set a rate by a fixed date, would enter the next financial year without sending out rate demands. Advocates of not making a rate argue that it brings all the lower tier councils into confrontation with central government at the same time, giving them collective strength. They believe the government, faced with having to send in commissioners to run a dozen or so councils, would back down and start negotiating.

The second, and less popular, course of action is that of deficit budgeting. Councils embarking on this tactic would deliberately set a rate which would not match their intended expenditure. As in the first method of defiance, councillors would risk surcharge and disqualification. It is also possible that commissioners with the power to over-ride the council would be brought in.

Some councils, like Greenwich, have already decided not to set a rate. On the other hand, at a special meeting of its Labour group and constituency parties this weekend, Hackney may well be the first council to decide on deficit budgeting. Support for this tactic among its Labour councillors has undoubtedly been influenced by the staggering gap between what Hackney says it needs to spend next year — at least £112m — and its rate-cap limit of £82m.

BUT THE difficulties inherent in adopting either of these tactics are now becoming apparent. Firstly, the councils' keenness for a united approach has to take into account the different position of the metropolitan authorities on the hit list. They are obliged to set a rate by March.

Secondly, opinions differ widely on the precise effect of each tactic. Proponents of not setting a rate, for example, argue it has the virtue of bringing the majority of the rate-capped councils into the firing line at exactly the same time. Next April, they argue, Patrick Jenkin could be faced with up to a dozen councils which are about to run out of money — unable to pay their employees or meet the many calls on their purses.

This is not strictly true. The financial position of the different authorities varies, depending on such factors as the state of their balances. Additionally, some councils still receive government money. It is significant that this year, when Liverpool city council teetered on the brink of making an illegal budget and effectively avoided making a rate for the greater part of the year, the government faithfully sent its rate support grant, ensuring that Liverpool had at least some cash. Critics of not setting a rate argue that councils like Islington and Camden, who receive virtually no government money, would be in trouble much earlier than the others and could be picked off individually as the money dries up.

The problems with deficit budgeting, on the other hand, are more obvious. It is a less ambivalent gesture — involving action rather than just failing to make a rate — and is consequently a more direct challenge to central government. And while its supporters argue it delays conflict because the council actually collects rates and runs out of money much later in the year, some lawyers believe it contravenes the 1967 Rates Act, which obliges local authorities to ensure that income matches expenditure. A council which announced its intention to go for deficit budgeting could, they say, justify immediate government intervention.

It may turn out to be the case that deficit budgeting can only be done by stealth — drawing up a budget in which expenditure exceeds the income allowed by the rate-cap limit but including fictional unspecified savings which appear to balance the books.

The councils face another problem. Defying the government, whatever form it takes, involves a high degree of personal risk for councillors. Disqualification from public office for five years is a potent threat for councillors who have set their sights on a seat at Westminster. The unstated fear is that three or four councils will eventually buckle under and use a variety of methods to comply with the rate-cap, such as using money from the balances.

HOW FAR council defiance will go depends in part on the security of their majorities and the demonstrable degree of public support. The majorities vary wildly. At the GLC, Labour's majority is 49 Labour councillors to three Tories and seven Liberals. Labour's majority in Sheffield is 35.

Then there are the councils destined by the government for extinction. On Merseyside Metropolitan Council, where the majority is 11, the Labour group has voted consistently and unanimously to defy the rate-cap. By next March, the council will know for certain whether it faces abolition. Councillors may face the prospect of taking huge personal risks for an authority which is about to disappear.

Keva Coombes, leader of Merseyside,

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believes the Labour group will hold simply because the cut demanded by Jenkin is so large, amounting to a 16.5 per cent reduction in spending. In London, the leaders of the Labour group at the ILEA have hit on a ploy which they hope will ensure unity in the Labour group next year.

ILEA has to set a rate next March but has decided to set it early, on 20 November. The object is to commit the group to an illegal rate, well above the rate-cap limit, and then campaign throughout London in support of it. The authority has already hired an advertising agency to place adverts in the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* (but, curiously, not the *Daily Mail*, which offends ILEA's socialist sensibilities).

'We will have a united Labour group,' says Frances Morrell, leader of ILEA. 'We haven't decided who is going to be heroic. We'll think about that the day before budget day in March. Those people who will wobble are far more likely to come with us if there is a major campaign to mobilise the people of London.'

The leadership clearly hopes that ILEA members who have publicly campaigned for the budget decided in November will be too embarrassed to change their minds when they have to confirm it in March. The drawback to this tactic is that even if the ILEA Labour group holds and orders lower tier authorities to collect the illegal rate, ratepayers would be under no obligation to pay it.

As all these disadvantages and legal traps begin to appear, the councils are starting to realise the value of not showing their hand. 'It would be unhelpful if people pinned themselves down too clearly,' says David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield. 'We don't think it's helpful to spell it out in concrete so it can be attached to your leg and ditched in the nearest harbour.'

For this reason, Tuesday's conference of Labour councils is unlikely to reach any firm decision about preferred tactics. (The strong rumour that the government intends to introduce a bill to enforce lower tier councils to make a rate by a fixed date is an additional reason for deferring decisions.) But it will play an important role in trying to draw in other authorities which, although not rate-capped this year, face such severe grant penalties that they cannot balance their books without massive rate rises.

'We want to ensure we carry as many of the hit list and other authorities at risk, recognising that we won't expect to have everybody feeling they can go along with the same solution,' says Blunkett. 'It's not a monolith we're after, it's a coherent policy.' □

This England

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□A frisson of distaste shudders through Hampstead residents at the news that Boy George will be moving into a £500,000 'formidable atrocity' (Sir N. Pevsner) in East Heath Road. 'I was horrified when I heard Boy George was coming.' says Mrs Peggy Jay, Chairman of the Heath and Old Hampstead Society. 'I simply hope that he doesn't become an environmental hazard.' — *Guardian* (George Moor)

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CLEFT IN ROCK OF AGES

With the Church of England General Synod due to meet next week, Terry Tastard previews the issues that are testing the church's ability to serve the people rather than the State

SLOWLY BUT surely the Church of England is moving into a situation in which its credibility as a contemporary moral force is at stake. Two kinds of challenge face the church, both well represented in the agenda at next week's meeting (13-16 November) of General Synod.

Can the church, first, incorporate the insights of changing society, in particular of feminism, and agree to ordain women as priests? Second, when it discusses issues like poverty and harsh economic policies, will it find the courage to oppose the opposition? Those accustomed to scrutinising the entrails of the Church of England will know the auguries are not good.

A move to open the priesthood to women was turned down by General Synod in 1978, since when pressure for a change in the church's stance has grown rapidly. England has been increasingly out of step with Anglicans elsewhere. There are currently some 620 women Anglican priests in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Kenya and Uganda. Some of these are English women who have had to go abroad to follow their calling, like Liz Canham now of New York or Kathleen Burn of Ontario. To the growing anger of their own churches, all women priests from abroad are prohibited from functioning as clergy when visiting England.

However, the number of men becoming Church of England priests is dropping. The authorities have set an annual target of over 400; but the average number ordained each year between 1980 and 1983 was 319. This shortfall comes at a time when many women of calibre are offering themselves for ministry.

If women are to enter the priesthood here, the General Synod will have to agree by a two-thirds majority in each of its three houses, Bishops, clergy and laity. This is most unlikely: the Church of England (despite some bold spirits in its ranks) tends to be hyper-cautious, especially among the clergy, and finds it hard to accommodate new insights.

Camera Press

This poster supports women priests in the USA

From Christian feminist groups a new theology is emerging. It stresses the need to reclaim the distinctive history and experience of women, and seeks to replace the old model of ministry, based on the authority of the priest, with one of mutual support and 'empowerment'. From liberation theologians comes an emphasis on small groups of believers seeing, through the questions their faith leads them to ask, where they are made less human and how they can initiate change.

YET IT IS difficult to see how such developments can be incorporated into the Church of England, which is fixated with the model of the priest in his parish. It pours huge resources into parish structures that fewer and fewer people want to use. The days of a cohesive community which would accept a single moral authority, are gone.

In 1960, 2.3 million people received communion in the Church of England at Easter; the 1980 figure was 1.7 million, a drop of 7 per cent on the adult population to 4.7 per cent. The figures for inner-city areas are much worse — here it is not unusual to find parishes with populations of about 10,000 and congregations of 60.

The inner-city decline of the established church links with feminism and liberation theology because it reminds us of how remote the church has seemed from people's experiences, in this case of poverty, deprivation and powerlessness. Thus when the Bishop of London, Dr Graham Leonard, says, as he did earlier this year, that he opposes the ordination of women because he believes in a biblical principle of subordination, it has implications beyond those for women. Such an outlook (and he speaks for many) would presumably support charity for the poor, but not structural change to remove poverty; will want the church to help the poor, but not the poor to help themselves.

In fact the Synod is also invited to pass a motion saying that 'short-term and narrowly conceived economic policies concerned only with sectional interests are dangerously inadequate'. Such a motion is potential dynamite, as is another on 'the rapid growth of poverty in our society'. But will the church light the fuse?

The economics motion accompanies the presentation of a report called *Perspectives on Economics* produced by a group of economists and theologians. In it Peter Baelz, Dean of Durham, criticises the idea that wealth can be pursued regardless of the cost to society. The Christian tradition, he says, 'puts in question any social or economic system which allows the world to be divided into the powerful and the powerless, the rich and the poor, and allows one group of people . . . to pursue its own welfare at the expense of others . . .*the whole of the community shares a responsibility for meeting the basic needs of each of its members.*'

Later he adds, '*No amount of material wealth can justify a divided and unjust society, or a world divided into permanent haves and have-nots*' (his emphases). This is fighting talk in Thatcherite Britain, where Michael Meacher and more recently the Inland Revenue report have reminded us of the growing gulf between rich and poor, where market forces are the order of the day and people are expected to look after themselves with the devil taking the hindmost.

When bishops speak out boldly and prophetically, the amount of publicity generated is out of all proportion to the church's numerical strength. The Tories know this and feel vulnerable to charges of hard-heartedness and lack of compassion. Their touchiness is shown by their attempts to rubbish David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, after the Dimbleby lecture where he condemned the 'two nations' produced by unemployment and neglect, and to portray the Archbishop of Canterbury as well-meaning but out of touch.

The miners' strike has divided the Church too. Vicars in strike-bound areas have launched appeals for food schemes, and in a recent statement the high church Jubilee Group of clergy and laity congratulated the miners on their courage and determination in taking a stand against mass unemployment. Yet the Church of England Children's Society has received shoals of letters protesting against its donations to feed the children of striking miners, and a South Yorkshire vicar who is also a local councillor voted against his council's decision to help establish communal canteens.

David Sheppard and the new Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, can be relied upon not to proffer bland generalities. However, the likelihood is that the sting of what they say will be drawn by Synod's dislike of appearing to confront the government. Anglicans are experts at broad statements of condemnation that do not actually attribute any blame.

Yet the question arises as to whether coded criticisms are enough. No one suggests that people will start flocking to church if bishops take a radical stance on, say, poverty. However, the present process of declining interest in the church began during the last century when it was seen as indifferent to the people's suffering. If the church repeats its mistake this time its credibility may be irreparably damaged. □

Terry Tastard is an Anglican Franciscan monk.

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PUBLISHING

SHOW TRIAL FOR THE DECADE

Are gays 'kiddie porn' hunt victims, asks Andrew Lumsden

WE APPEAR to be set fair, if fair is the word, for another of those censorship and morality trials which have already started to feature under Mrs Thatcher. This time it is due to be Custom & Excise v Gay's the Word bookshop. It is expected that the parties will be in court during 1985. The authorities are likely to try to find time in the court calendar sooner rather than later in view of the interest already aroused since Customs officials raided the Bloomsbury premises of Gay's the Word, and the homes of some directors, on 10 April (*NS* 2 November and passim).

The raid was under the 'Writ of Assistance' granted to Customs at the beginning of each reign. There have been 24 seizure notices in respect of 144 distinct 'titles' (comprising over 2,000 volumes which Gay's the Word had sought to import and which have a retail value of some £10,000) under the Customs Consolidation Act 1876 and Management Act 1979. The 1876 Act (in this respect unaltered in 1979) prohibits imports of 'indecent or obscene' articles and allows, unlike the Obscene Publications Acts of 1959 and 1964, *no defence* of 'literary or artistic merit', or advancement of science and learning. Prosecutions under the 1876 Act have only to establish before magistrate or jury that an article might be thought indecent by the (*sic*) 'man in the street'.

The Defend Gay's the Word Campaign has published a complete list of the seized titles, which cover virtually all categories to be found in any reputable bookshop: biography, autobiography, history, politics and studies, health, sex and counselling guides, humour, books for young people, poetry, drama, contemporary gay and lesbian fiction, and erotic fiction. Nearly all were coming in from the USA.

Procedurally, Customs, who work under the auspices of the Treasury, first 'detained' the books (it can do so without notification for as long as it likes), then issued 'seizure notices'. The shop has to indicate within 28 days, as it has done, that it wants to dispute 'condemnation' in court. Hearings, unless Customs itself wants to go to a higher court, are before magistrates and do *not* set a precedent. Even if a magistrates' court clears a title, Customs is free to seize another copy if it comes into the country, and start proceedings again.

The absence under the Customs Consolidation Act 1876 of any defence of literary or artistic merit appears to be the reason why Customs in recent months has felt free to seize any number of titles which have been published with impunity *within* the UK. To take only one instance, on 8 October Customs issued a seizure notice against Gay's the Word in respect of *The Book of the City of Ladies*, a 15th century allegory previously published in the UK by the highly regarded publisher Picador, and still on sale in British bookshops. So outrageous is this conduct that by 20 October the *Bookseller*, prestigious journal of the book trade, demanded in an editorial to know how 'an item [can be] obscene in one law office, and not in another; indecent or obscene under one law, but not under another'?

Pam Isherwood/Format

GLC Leader at Gay's the Word 'Open Day'

The *Bookseller* has also raised point-blank the question of why Gay's the Word's books have been subjected to such a blizzard of activity under the century-old Customs Consolidation Act, and not been the object of any attempted prosecutions under the Obscene Publications Act (using which the Director of Public Prosecutions tried, and largely failed, to penalise the distributors of drugs books earlier this year). 'What advantages did the authorities stand to gain by working through Customs & Excise?' it asked. And why has the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) not moved against UK publishers of some of the imported American-published works (eg, not to ill-wish them, Chatto & Windus, who have just published *Aphrodisiac* in a UK edition, though Customs have seized the US version from Gay's the Word)? The *Bookseller* questions presuppose, of course, that one or another entity to be called 'the authorities' (the Cabinet? The DPP?) has set out to thump gay people, and used Customs.

Has it? It's the smoking gun question. There is, however, a hypothesis that tends in that direction. The office of the DPP (Sir Thomas Hetherington) has been under almost continuous pressure to eradicate 'kiddie porn', both during the period that led up to the 1978 Protection of Children Act and since. On 14 August 1983 three men abducted and sexually assaulted a boy of six in the Brighton area (following which Brighton police carefully and publicly distinguished between the Brighton gay community, which sought to give any help it could, and the perpetrators of the crime). Customs men who raided Gay's the Word on 10 April let slip that their operation had been six months in preparation. That takes its genesis back to about October 1983.

Over a comparable period police were preparing the case for this week's trial of persons associated with PIE (Paedophile Information Exchange) on charges of publishing an obscene article and inciting others to have sex with under 16 year-olds. In February 1984 Scottish police visited the Edinburgh lesbian and gay bookshop Lavender Menace seeking copies of a magazine erroneously supposed to be a paedophile newsletter (the Procurator Fiscal later returned the copies).

And this 25 July the Obscene Publications squad raided the long-established Zipper store in London's Camden, which sells goods and reading matter for gay men and whose proprietor also publishes Britain's excellent monthly gay news magazine *Him/Gay Times*. They again made it clear they were particularly looking for 'under age' material, photographic or otherwise.

The impression left is that the Customs operations against Gay's the Word (and against a number of other lesbian/gay importers from the US) may be the by-product of officialdom's drive in the unrelated area of abuse, or alleged abuse, of children. If so, the abysmal opinion held by government and its agencies of lesbians, gay men, and all our enterprises is again demonstrated. □

ENERGY

WHAT THEY REALLY PLAN FOR COAL

Colin Sweet looks at long-term energy strategies

THE DISPUTE in the coal industry is not about 'uneconomic pits'. It is about the government's long-term determination to ensure that Britain's energy needs are supplied from as many sources as possible. Its energy strategy therefore is one of maximum diversification so that the economy — and politics — of the country will not depend on one industry dominated by one union with a mass membership strongly rooted in working class politics. In this they have the support of almost the whole 'Energy Establishment'.

Of course, the rising costs of old pits is an issue, but no more than it was 10 or 20 years ago. But the category of uneconomic pits arrived with Ian MacGregor. It is undefinable and, for that reason, non-negotiable. Whether or not the cost of mining coal in one pit is 'uneconomic' must be arbitrary — a line drawn by accountants — because there is no free market in coal prices. Britain's coal industry has only one producer, the NCB, and one very large buyer, the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB).

As a monopoly producer, the NCB fixes the

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price — not market forces. It does of course take account of the market but its tests of efficiency are effectively determined by itself, the government and the CEGB. It is a nationally protected industry, and its prices are a result of a policy decision not an economic decision. (If the government wins this strike, it would not be surprising if they went on to sell profitable mines to private companies; nor if 'uneconomic' pits were snapped up and worked for their last few tons of coal.)

For instance, for the last five years, the NCB could have sold coal to the CEGB at a higher price. Contrary to what John Hatch, chairman of the Electricity Consumers' Council, has argued, electricity consumers have not been subsidising coal, for coal prices to the CEGB have lagged well behind the price of electricity.

If the NCB had not held the price of coal almost constant in real terms it would have been able to show a substantial trading surplus. Had it done so, the disputed 'uneconomic pits' would not have required a £285 million subsidy and the question of peremptorily closing them down — the issue that sparked the strike — would not have arisen.

THIS IS NOT to suggest that had the artefact of 'uneconomic pits' not been used there would have been no conflict. For the government's argument is merely a rationalisation of the built-in conflict between its energy strategy, decided upon long ago, and miners' interests.

The future of energy supply is such a highly political issue that governments avoid policy commitments in this area (the last White Paper on Energy Policy was in 1967). Given the complex of very powerful interests on the supply side — CEGB, the unions, the oil industry etc — governments neither initiate nor encourage public discussion.

Coal, however, does have a national policy — Plan for Coal, which was signed (and re-signed as recently as 1980) by the unions, the NCB and the government. It is a planning agreement that could be replicated by other industries and it is easy to believe that the present government is unsympathetic to this kind of commitment.

Why then did Mrs Thatcher put her signature to it? The answer lies in what was agreed in 1974. It was not only the year of the miners' strike and a new Labour government; it was also the year of the great oil price hike. Policy was reversed to return to coal — but on the basis of a new political concordat — the Plan for Coal. However much the corporate bodies in the energy establishment disliked the agreement, they did not want to be seen breaching it.

Up until the Plan, the policy had been to have an 'All Electric Economy' based on the promise of abundant cheap energy churned out by nuclear power stations. The Plan gave coal the role of principal source of electric power. It projected that output reach 135 million tons of coal by 1985, compared with 117 million in 1974, and 170 million by the year 2000.

It is not surprising the miners felt optimistic. This projection meant a very large programme of investment. On the basis of an average loss of 2 million tons of capacity per year due to exhaustion, the replacement rate would have to be about 4 million tons of new capacity a year to keep to the target.

But in 1977 the 1985 target was revised down to 120 million tons in the light of the unexpected fall in demand for energy. The weaknesses in the Plan were beginning to show.

- The *investment* and planning implications inherent in such a large increase in output were not well thought out. The 1977 revision raised the investment requirement for the period up to 1985 from £1400 million to £3150 million. But this expenditure has not added to total capacity, merely paid for modernising existing pits.
- The *estimate of demand* used in the Plan was seriously defective. It was based on satisfying the wishes of the producers of coal and electricity, not of consumers. The growth target for the year 2000 was about 200 million tons coal equivalent above what is likely to be required. It was done for political reasons and the TUC in particular can be held responsible for perpetuating this piece of nonsense and the miners for being foolish enough to buy it.
- No reference is made in the Plan to *nuclear power*. Yet it is readily apparent that if nuclear power is to expand coal has to contract. The NUM, then under a different leadership, was constrained by the enthusiasm of most of the other trade unions in the power supply industry. Largely right-wing and isolated from working-class communities, they were sold on the idea of clean and scientifically advanced nuclear power. No one faced up to the incompatibility of the two targets for coal and nuclear power.
- Also excluded from the Plan was the other politically loaded question — *imported coal*. Advocates of cutting coal output have argued for open competition in the world markets. This is linked to their case for removing the present subsidy to coal and the two issues need a co-ordinated response.

The pressure for an open door policy come from UK multinationals, like BP and Shell, operating from off shore bases with considerable investment in the coal trade. These and other interests believe that they have everything to gain from breaking up a centrally controlled, nationally protected coal industry. Their objectives include the restructuring and possibly the dismantling of the NCB. In the last analysis, the NCB and coal unions have a common interest in the long-term defence of a national industry.

There can be no doubt that the unions and the Labour Party have been complacent about the Plan for Coal and unwilling to face the political choices it involves. This has blunted the case for coal and their neglect, or timidity, has been a gain for the powerful complex of interests that want to dethrone coal.

BEHIND THEIR formal commitment to the 'spirit' of the Plan for Coal, the government's view is actually the *reverse* of the Plan. Its position is thus essentially dishonest and epitomises the confusion that lies at the heart of the present dispute.

The government's plan begins with a severe contraction of the industry, to perhaps half its present size. But size is not the only objective nor even the most important. Re-organisation is

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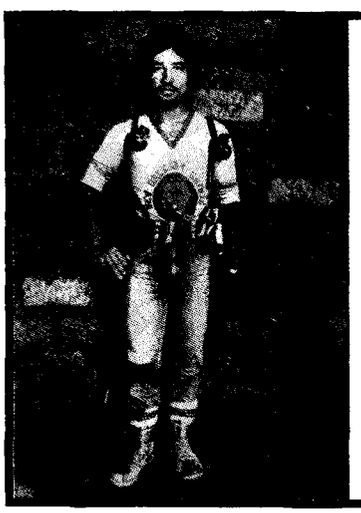

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to accompany the scaling down process to reduce dependence on both the mineworkers and, to a lesser extent, the power workers.

'Getting out of coal' is therefore not so much an energy strategy as a major political option. It was the objective before 1974. It remains the objective, gathering in urgency, as time runs out. The policy is of diversification especially into nuclear power through the agency of the CEGB. But because it is not explicit it has caused confusions in the minds of all but the guiding few — and a desperate conflict with the miners as they dig in and fight back.

Had the strategy been the simple one of providing energy at the cheapest possible price to the consumer then, for instance, the expensive oil fired power stations would have been converted to dual oil and coal firing. But they have been kept mothballed, ready to resume oilfired production. The CEGB chose this expensive option because nuclear power was not able to deliver. The channel link to the French grid, which will probably draw on the plentiful supplies from nuclear power stations in Normandy is part of the strategy, but has a capacity of only 2000 megawatts.

In particular the commitment of the CEGB's chairman Sir Walter Chairman to the Pressurised Water Reactor programme, which he pushed through when at the United Kingdon Atomic Energy Authority, is proving a costly disaster. And as the failure of the construction industry, nuclear agency and generating boards to deliver new plant to time or costs repeated itself to an intolerable degree, so confidence worldwide in nuclear power was ebbing. The attempt to replace coal by the nuclear option is creating immense problems for the establishment and is beginning to divide them among themselves. To some, *only* their desire to make the switch from coal makes it appear worthwhile.

What then of the future for electricity supply? In terms of cost and availability coal is the only safe option. The coal industry and electricity supply indeed ought to be planned very largely as one industry, as they are so interdependent. No doubt Sir Walter Marshall and Mr MacGregor were appointed with the same essential brief — to dismember and shrink the coal industry and diversify electricity supply. They were both personally chosen by Mrs Thatcher to slot in with each other. But they are both a disaster. While MacGregor has, in the government's eyes, badly mishandled the reduction of coal so Sir Walter, who has staked his reputation on the delivery of the PWR stations, has mishandled the build-up of the alternative source.

Labour's task when next in government will be to replace both men and the policies they represent. The next generation of power stations to be built should be coal fired and they should be planned on the basis of an integrated electricity supply industry. The CEGB told the Monopolies Commission in 1980 that it envisaged a fall in coal burn to 50-55 million tons by the end of the century. This was further scaled down in the Sizewell inquiry to 15-30 million tons.

The sooner the Labour Party and the TUC repudiate the plan and lay the basis for an updated plan for coal the better. It is not enough to know what we are against. It is as least as important to know what we are for. □

Cable comes unstitched

Phillip Whitehead

THE GREAT cable stitch-up is unravelling before our eyes. Mr Kenneth Baker, that wonderfully comic figure who told us that within ten years every inch of Britain would be cabled at no cost to the taxpayer, has departed to huff and puff at the GLC. He leaves behind him a bewildered tangle of cable operators, whom he had designated as the mass entertainment motor force with which we could hitch a ride into the technological future. It was already clear when I last wrote here that the operators were in trouble, and would be pressing for minimum regulation, maximum clearance for old foreign material, and very long leases indeed. What was not audible then was the scuttering and scuffling as operators and investors alike tried to get out from under.

The original group of cable applicants were designated by the Home Office, before the new cable authority got itself together. In expertise, in possession of current (if sometimes obsolescent) systems, and in financial reserves, Rediffusion led all the rest. It had prepared longer. It was the biggest relay operator, with systems in 53 cities. It had executives like Nicholas Mellersh with many years in the business. Those of us who debated them around the country, as the Cable Television Association softened up the government, had to respect their preparation, however much we disagreed with them. The granting of the first franchises should have been their finest hour. It seems to have been the start of a nightmare.

Last month Micholas Mellersh abruptly resigned from Rediffusion, and the company subsequently sold its entire cable interests to the omnivorous Robert Maxwell. With it, Mr Maxwell secured Rediffusion's 14 per cent holding in TEN/The Movie Channel, the larger of the two conglomerates supplying programmes. He also takes over the commitment to build the high-tech Guildford cable system, for which Rediffusion were licensed. All this he adds to existing holdings in SelecTV and Clyde Cablevision.

The loss of nerve by Rediffusion's owners, British Electric Traction, is not unique to them. The second largest relay system, VisionHire, abruptly pulled out of cable development on the day before Rediffusion was sold. The developers feel they were sold a sickly pup by Kenneth Baker. The new switched star technology is neither available nor proven. British Telecom as a partner is setting high prices for its expertise. A major change in tax allowances for capital investment in the last Budget hit case development. Worse, the subscriber take-up of the available cable systems has been far lower than predicted. The British have neither the continental interest in programmes from over their borders, nor the American need for both better reception and better programmes, which supplement the appetite for more and more movies. And even this last, which has made Home Box Office (HBO) a financial success in the US, is limited here by the rapid growth of video recorders and the high street shops which supply the movies. Britain has the highest VCR ownership in the world (35 per cent of households against 13 per cent in the USA).

All of this was known when Mr Baker's near dozen cable operators were announced. So was the imminence of the technology which would deliver programmes to the home via DBS (Direct Broadcasting by Satellite). The cable lobby were in a frenzy to get in first, with old technology if they could, with the promise of the new if they couldn't. Mr Baker saw them as a cut-price shot at a national broadband communications grid. So he obliged them. It has not come off. The alternative was to take the public service route, with British Telecom as the national common carrier, linking telephone, home terminal, interactive services and data transmission, as well as television services leased out to operators who wanted to run such a facility. The Mitterrand government has taken this route, reasoning that what is available to one should be available to all, and that a national investment in a broadband grid is a proper priority.

The Thatcher government, by contrast, has assumed that the Market would do the job for it. The Market knows better. The investment will be costly, the returns slow to come in. So we shall be left with a piecemeal development. If the BBC/IBA satellite operation also proves too expensive that area will also be left to the entrepreneurs. Mr Murdoch has his Sky Channel already, supplying millions of lucky Europeans in the smaller countries. On the ground Mr Maxwell is slugging it out with British Telecom in areas like Merseyside, where the local consortium are begging him to take majority control, but he is unwilling to pay BT's construction charges.

Here is a new field of mass communications. Its long-term importance is undeniable. So is its launch expense. Why is it that here once again the Market delivers to those who have? Power in Fleet Street transferred and perpetuated in the media of tomorrow. The labour movement has not begun to wake up to the implications of all this. As the argument rages over the privatisation of British Telecom this week, we ought to reflect on one of the main reasons why we want it back in public control — as the best feasible constructor of new media systems which can be accountable to the community, available overall, and seen as long-term investment rather than short-term profit. □

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DIARY

Who paid Arthur Scargill's £1,000 fine to prevent him being a 'martyr'? Looking at the *Mirror* my guess is that the secret donation came from Maxwell. I have no inside information to this effect, but the paper has now become an instrument for strike breaking, Paul Foot apart. If there is a decisive 'drift back to work', Maxwell may even get into the House of Lords. What I've liked about him, perhaps the only thing, is his anti-establishment instinct: the welcome if brutal energy of an *arriviste*. Alas, it seems he sincerely wants to arrive. At least Murdoch has so far scorned the honours and snobbery of the poms.

○

Maxwell's attempt to heist the Ethiopian famine is particularly odious. So I was delighted to see that Oxfam upstaged him, docking a shipload of supplies into the country (from a vessel that sailed before the current outcry) some days ahead of Maxwell's own cargo — 30 tons that he hailed as the first major aid from the Western world no less. I won't say that Oxfam is my favourite charity, in case that might be thought to politicise an admirably neutral organisation. Instead, I'll report how, on local radio, a woman said she was doing something about a disaster for the first time, raising money for Ethiopia via Oxfam. She cited the example of their success in Cambodia. It pleased me that the current squabble over *that* issue has not effected popular perceptions. When Vietnam overthrew Pol Pot, the world said there was a famine. The Vietnamese said there was not, whereupon Hanoi was accused of starving the Khmer. Then the Vietnamese, and the Heng Samrin regime which they established in Phnom Penh, called for aid to Cambodia. Now this is said to have been some kind of trick because there wasn't a famine after all. Pilger is right to scorn the distinction between a famine and a mass famine. But, as I understand it, people were not starving to death over most of Cambodia in 1979-1980, as they are in large parts of Ethiopia today. Indeed some had gorged themselves on rice stocks when the Khmer Rouge fled — those stocks that had not been destroyed. This meant there were no reserves and so the undoubted scarcity threatened to become catastrophic. The relief programme sent in seed rice, of which there was none, and lorries, of which there were almost none, to deliver the seed. In this the agencies were magnificently successful. Aid *prevented* an Ethiopian style mass famine, which undoubtedly would have occurred in Cambodia without it.

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Perhaps it's my pyromaniac disposition, but I was quite moved by the public cremation of Mrs Gandhi. Less impressive was the torrent of praise from world leaders for her tremendous statespersonship — as we say on the *New States!*!*. After all, one of her few genuine acts of international good sense was to recognise the Heng Samrin government in Cambodia. (If she was so farsighted, why don't the others do likewise?) My main thoughts on the funeral were dynastic. I recalled a letter from a certain, aptly named 'James Page' of W13, in the *New States!*!* earlier this year which recommended monarchy to Third World countries as a better form of government, one which would increase their standard of living. Who am I to spoil such a claim by pointing to slavery in the kingdoms of Thailand and Saudi Arabia . . . but it seems that even as I scorned New Delhi was taking the advice of our correspondent.

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Such reflections made me turn to the new paperback edition of R. F. Tapsell's *Monarchs, Rulers, Dynasties and Kingdoms of the World*, an essential work of reference for every Lefty (my edition snuggles up against *Practical Wordstar*) with its staggering lists of more than a thousand historic dynasties under which the toiling masses groaned. Working from Tapsell's introduction I count 22 monarchies as having been toppled since 1945, with 26 still to go. What he does not provide us with, however, is a table of the 'New Monarchies'. I mean the modern states in which real power has now been handed on to a second generation of a ruling family. India and Haiti have got there. Just on the horizon of success: North Korea, Singapore and Rumania. Are there any others I wonder?

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Last week I had dinner at an Oxbridge high table. I won't say which as my host was most

enjoyable company. It wasn't his fault that at least one of the dons was a complete deadhead. My only significant discomfort was that I had to wear a tie. To me these have always seemed absurd items of apparel, especially since an anthropologist once mentioned in passing that they are 'of course' phallic symbols. Failure to wear your phallic symbol will cause offense . . . Do straighten your thing dear . . . Why does this make me think of the House of Commons? Recently, well not so recently, I was kindly taken to the press gallery of the House where I watched the strange, intimate theatre of British politics. My mind began to wander, and as my eyes closed the oft repeated phrase, 'honourable member', 'the right honourable *member*' took on scatalogical proportions: they began to rise and having risen fell, sometimes to cries of 'Withdraw! Withdraw!'. Just as day follows night, if members are capable of being honourable some must also be dishonourable — just think of the catalogue of parliamentary lies over the *Belgrano*.

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So Zola stays in South Africa. What a laugh. And another vindication for the GLC! This by way of self-criticism and humble pie as alone on the Left I argued that we should welcome the precedent of her running for Britain, and thus let every banned athlete take part in the Olympics by the same token passport. I gave the example of South African marathon runner Ernest Seleke. Now that Zola has gone there *must* be room for him — if only to replace her — on 'this small crowded etc'. We can be sure that he will not embarrass any sponsor by returning. He's black. For myself, I try never to run. But in the Autumn as the leaves fall, I take the odd walk, in the hope that this will clarify my thoughts as the year turns. What's more I have just discovered that Hazlitt loved to walk. As he described it: 'I plunge into my past being . . . I begin to feel, think, and be myself again'. Sounds wonderful. But it never works for me. How did Hazlitt do it? On occasions I can think in the bath, thoughts even occur to me in front of my word-box, but I seem incapable of original cogitation — an author's holy grail — while on the move.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Choice

The US government has denounced the Sandinista victory in the Nicaraguan elections as a 'farce' because it claimed there was no meaningful opposition.

Pity the plight of a captive people,
Doomed to a diet of rice and beans,
Chained and forbidden to worship *Dallas* —
How can they know what democracy means?

Where is the meaningful opposition
There in the dust of our own back yard?
Where are the heroes who served Somoza?
Where are the flags of the National Guard?

Any regime that reveres its children
Renders them victims of Russian rule;
Anyone strong for the rights of women
Merits exposure as Satan's tool.

Love of balloons and the bulging holster,
God and Walt Disney and apple-pie,
Freedom to study the *Wall Street Journal* —
These are the values that we hold high.

Here we are patently pluralistic,
Donkeys and elephants have their ways.
Listen and hear how much they differ:
One of them trumpets, the other one brays.

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RAJIV ASCENDS HIS THRONE

David Selbourne argues that the British have long had illusions about post-independence India. It is a sub-continent, not a nation, as Rajiv Gandhi knows

INDIA — Janus-faced world of intellect and unreason; haughty pride and abject submission; of great riches and gross deprivation; of bodiless spirit and carnality in triumph; of many-armed violence and non-violence, hands folded in a pious *namas kar* — has once more reduced to beggary the thin, British sense of its meanings.

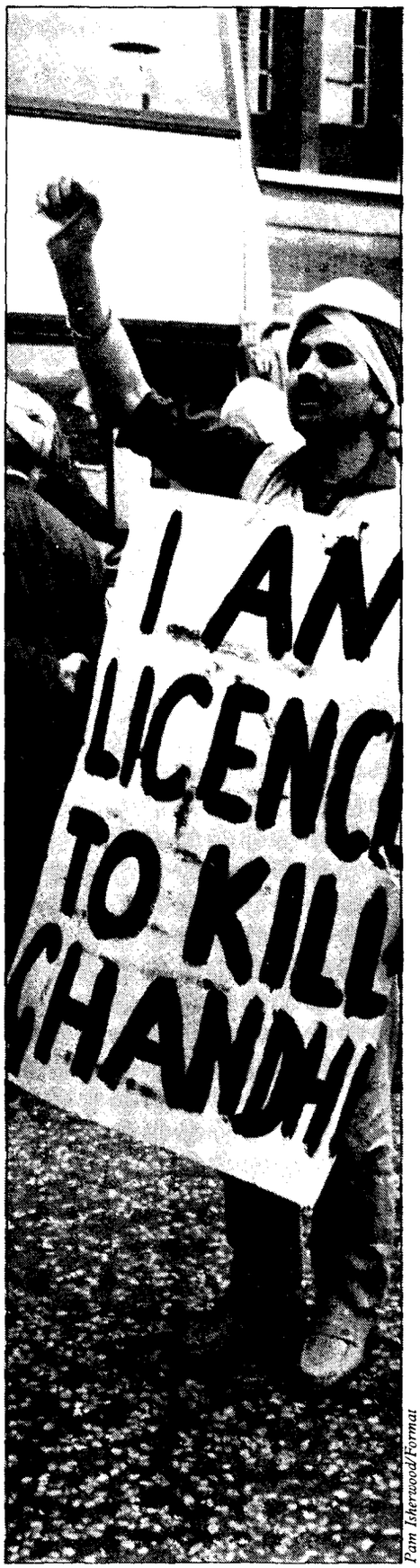
The India skilfully and self-destructively ruled by Mrs Gandhi with wads of banknotes and a rod of iron, with a nod and a wink — and (where necessary to *Realpolitik*) the bastinado — has once more, as in every crisis of comprehension of it, become the 'world's largest democracy', which she died 'defending'.

This is not what happened in the Sikh attack at Safdarjung Road, New Delhi; but, at least, Indians themselves know it. The murder of Mrs Gandhi was a revenge killing (merely one of many in a cycle of killings and counter-killings) for the death of the militant Sikh leader Sant Bhindrinwale. Born from Mrs Gandhi's side, he was promoted by intrigue, funds passed from hand to hand and a flicker of the eyelid, to divide the Akali Dal, the once powerful Sikh regional political party and the government party in Punjab until 1980. And when the black-bearded sorcerer's apprentice outgrew the mistress who had spawned him, he was rubbed out, with hundreds of his followers, in a massacre that made Valentine's Day in Chicago seem like a High Commissioner's tea-party.

Yet Fabian and other custodians of India's imaginary national history trooped po-faced to Mrs Gandhi's funeral pyre on the Jumna River with comic ex-colonial pretensions — played on with great skill in Delhi — as to their special relationship with the House of Nehru; and will, it seems, go on insisting that brutal assassination, dynastic succession and the fiefdoms of the 'black polity', which constitute the true state of India, are all aberrations. There may be a generational shift — from the 'Westminster model', 'pegs' of whiskey, hill stations and Peter Sellers voices to the guru, the sitar and the ashram — but they are all surrogates for the sounds of last week's gunfire.

Thus the Mrs Gandhi they have celebrated, and justly by their lights — as an ex-Somerville undergraduate 'Commonwealth leader' and honorary white hope of the world's parliamentary systems — is *their* Anglo-Saxon version of Mother India, an English-speaking and most mannerly goddess Durga; a nostalgic colonial parody, product of English circumspection and wishful thinking, clad still in a self-protecting solar topee, its spectacles tinted against a light too blinding.

Even at first sight and on first encounter, Mrs Gandhi, modest, fey, even coy and girlish, but brow swiftly darkening with impatience and anger, was fathoms away from our simple comprehensions: in a heavy, thick-strapped wristwatch, prettily shod in pink silk slippers peeping beneath her sari, with one eye of a dark unreason, twitching, twitching, twitching; meek, with her English cadences and courteous liberal grace-notes ('warm, humane, and full of understanding', Mrs Thatcher, 31 October 1984); yet eyes hooded upon an innner world of corruption, palace intrigue and paranoia, face uncontrollably ticking.



Pam Isherwood/Format

Next week Amrit Wilson writes about the basis of today's Sikh nationalism.

Indeed, Ango-Saxon illusion about her has a lot to answer for; not least for the moral and political support given to her and her hoodlum younger son Sanjay by some of the Labour Party's leading humanitarians, even when they unleashed from the same Safdarjung Road the savage delinquencies of the 1975 Emergency. They then saved their political skins with the mass arrests of political oppoenents of left, right and centre, and with (yes) murders and tortures — many exquisitely and orientally refined, including the insertion of chilli powder into the orifices of the more defiant; and held their own by means of rule over Delhi through a motley gang, unmasked by the 1977 Shah Commission, of used car-dealers, bit-part actresses, Rasputin yogis, and semi-educated city slickers, who constituted (and still constitute) the grass roots of the Indira Congress Party.

This is not your India, gentle reader; and the telegram of support from Jennie Lee, citing a passage from Aneurin Bevan's *In Place of Fear*, which Mrs Gandhi showed me in December 1975 as the exhilirating excesses mounted, did not come from any Labour Party that I would want to belong to. How did the telegram read? You will find its content repeated, almost word for word, in Neil Kinnock's rhetorical and empty elegiac to Mrs Gandhi (31 October in the House of Commons): 'She knew, in the words of her friend Aneurin Bevan, that *political liberty is the by-product of economic sufficiency*'.

And so emboldened by a 'chit' from London (there were many others), lathi blows — and worse — rained down with gusto, in defence of the throne in Delhi, upon the heads of the people in India. And, did you notice that the temple sacking and mass killings at Amritsar last June, carried out with exemplary army brutality and at the impatient instigation of (the seemingly impassive) Rajiv Gandhi, have been justified, this time by the avuncular James Callaghan, stolid in Delhi, in the name of law land order? Obviously, the natives — and General Dyer had this problem too at Jallianwallah Bagh, around the corner from the Golden Temple — do tend to get rather restless and overheated, instead of referring their grievances to collective bargaining, or an Indian version of Acas.

Today, with their five-star hotel rooms vacated — where it costs up to a year's labouring wage for one night's bed and breakfast — the mourners have departed, taking their foolish

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SPEECH

by Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, at the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Committee in Moscow on October 23, 1984.

The CPSU Central Committee regards land improvement as "the decisive factor for further developing agriculture and steadily expanding the country's food stock", said Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee at the recent plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the party discussing a plan for land improvement for the period up to 2000.

"The matters at issue are major additional measures aimed at solving the food problem on the basis of a consistent intensification of agricultural production and extensive land improvement", he said.

Konstantin Chernenko said that the two years of the realisation of the food programme of the country (adopted in 1982) were a fruitful period. The aggregate production of farm produce in 1983 and 1984 will be some 20,000 million roubles up on the first two years of the five-year plan period. 1983 witnessed the greatest output of farm produce ever in the country's history. "And also in the current year, pitted against extremely adverse weather conditions, with a terrible drought hitting many districts, the rural workers are waging a heroic struggle to make certain that the result will not be smaller".

There are signs of changes in livestock farming. The average annual output of milk has grown by 7.4 million tons, that of meat by 1.4 million tons and that of eggs by 4600 million. The production of vegetables and fruit has gone up substantially.

"The key problem, as before, is that of steadily expanding grain production. It is essential to ensure such rates of its growth as would make it possible to meet all the country's needs in the next few years", Konstantin Chernenko said. "The second pressing task is to consolidate the positive trends in livestock farming and do everything possible to accelerate its development".

"Everything positive that has been achieved at this stage and everything we are yet to accomplish are connected in many ways with the measures being adopted towards the social transformation of the countryside", the Soviet leader emphasised.

In 1981-1984 the living conditions of more than ten million people will be improved. Almost every second rural family has either a car or a motorcycle.

After the adoption of the resolutions on developing personal smallholdings, the population of privately-owned cattle has grown by 1,600,000 head, as has the number of pigs. People have also begun to keep more sheep and poultry. This is a substantial supplement to what our collective and state farms produce.

Migration of rural population to the towns has started to decrease over recent years. In the past three years the outflow of people from the countryside on the whole has dwindled by eight per cent. In the Russian Federation it has shrunk by 24 per cent and in the non-black-soil zone by 30 per cent. The birth rate among rural families has increased. In 1983 in rural areas it reached the highest mark for the past 20 years.

At the same time Konstantin Chernenko noted that the situation in a number of sectors of agriculture "remains difficult". "The problems raised by life on the road of turning agriculture into a highly-developed economic sector demand new and the most effective solutions", he said.

The decisions on land improvement which are to be adopted by the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee "will indisputably open up a new and major stage in raising the fertility of lands", the Soviet leader went on to say. "In a comparatively short time it is planned to extend the area of irrigated and drained lands by 50 per cent, which will make it possible to double crop output there. As a result, the country will be able to produce nearly one half of its gross crop harvest irrespective of weather fluctuations".

"It is planned to set up major zones of the warranted production of farm produce on an industrial basis, a kind of grain, fodder, and vegetable factory", he said.

Speaking of the tasks in the sphere of land improvement Konstantin Chernenko specially dwelt on ecological problems. "Carrying out large-scale land improvement, we are invading nature in one way or another. This should be done very carefully so that in transforming land we should not do harm to it but, conversely, improve and ameliorate it and multiply the potentialities of nature. All of us should think not only about today but also about tomorrow and avoid making hasty and ill-considered decisions".

The Soviet leader then passed on to questions related to preparations for the regular 27th CPSU Congress. "The political bureau of the CPSU Central Committee devotes particular attention to the preparation of a new edition of the CPSU programme", he said. "At the same time proposals are being worked out for possible changes in the party rules". The rules, just like the new edition of the programme "should reflect the high requirements on the organisation of the party's inner life, on the style and methods of work of every component of the party, on the work and conduct of communists, and on their activity, responsibility and discipline, requirements stemming from the CPSU's political course.

An inseparable component of preparations for the congress is the drafting of plans for the 12th five year-plan period and for the longer term, which are to embody and concretize the party's economic strategy to the end of the present century", Konstantin Chernenko said.

The main goal of these plans is "to raise, by relying on the ever more substantial results of the work of the Soviet people, public welfare to a qualitatively new level, considerably to improve the material, cultural and intellectual standards of the life of our people".

Principal ways for achieving new frontiers of socio-economic progress, said the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, are "an accelerated development of social production and the maximum possible utilization of the intensive factors of growth. We must achieve already in the 12th five-year plan period a breakthrough in raising the efficiency of the national economy".

"Making preparations for its congress, the party concentrates the efforts of the working people on successfully meeting the plan targets of the current year and the five-year plan period as a whole. It can be said already today that the results of this year will be not bad", the Soviet leader said. "The national economy continues to gain momentum, quality indicators are becoming better, and the living standards of the Soviet people are rising".

"But we clearly see shortcomings as well. Quite a few enterprises and farms and some industries are working below capacity and fail to meet their plan targets and commitments. There still is time. There is more than a year to go to the end of the five-year plan period and a good deal can be amended".

Completing his speech Konstantin Chernenko expressed the conviction that the "fulfilment of the long-term programme of land improvement will become a national cause. It will make it possible to take another major stride towards highly developed and stable agricultural production and to raise the entire Soviet economy to a higher level", he said. (Summary)

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nostrums about India with them. And Delhi will be settling back to its executive licence and arbitary power; with its Westminster model in form, and its dynastic rule in substance, to be presented in due course to universl suffrage for a re-annointing; with its cat's cradles of patronage and feudal courtiership, in which members of parliament and both houses serve not as representatives of their constituencies, but as conduits for the passage of graft-lubricated petitions from petitioners to the petitioned. (And a part of every buck stops at Safdarjung Road, one way or another.)

Nor is there any system-builder's 'dysfunction' in it. The 'black polity', with all its dark webs and fine filiations, constructed upon the uninhabitable ruins of the 'white polity' left behind by the British raj, *works* — even if the price is family rule and internecine faction, greed and gun-law, populism and assassination, from Mahatma to Indira Gandhi. But to grasp it, the nearly forty-year history of post-independence India will have to be rewritten. And where better to start, given its special relation, too, than here in the *New Statesman*?

IT IS A HISTORY of a sub-continent, not a nation; the history of a post-colonial society struggling first to digest, and then (justly) to disgorge, the legacy of Empire; the history of a national independence movement, the Indian National Congress, become by reversion and regression not merely the instrument of faction but of a para-state apparatus (interwoven with the State's formal institutions) of political mediation and grass roots intimidation; the history of a federal union, presided over by dynasts in the name of national unity and increasingly unable to devolve authority to growing sub-national aspirations, those of the Sikhs among them; and the history, in consequence, of a gradually accelerating vortex of instabilities in that 'unchanging India' constructed by political fiction.

The wheel of the Indian ox-cart may seem to myth-bound outsiders to turn slowly. But Mrs Gandhi, the conquering heroine of the 1971 Bangladesh war, had become only four years later the embattled Emergency figure, pushed to the wall by J.P. Narayan's crusade against corruption; and the Emergency itself was swept away in 1977, while its quickly crippled successor Janata regime survived not much longer.

Since 1980 — Karnataka, Assam, Punjab and Andhra were the way-stations — Mrs Gandhi's fortunes had once more been steadily waning. Indeed, the fatal act of hubris in Amritsar — with its miserable nemesis in Delhi — are a grim warning to the evanescent 'new' generation of corpulent young Turks grouped around Rajiv Gandhi. It is not merely that he has two years at most, on present form, to establish his rule — that is, if the Sikhs do not get him first — but that the modernising impulse and the divinising of power, the two-edged sword of nepotist faction and the ploughshare of national regeneration, are irreconcileable except by violence. Certainly, there is no stable political dispensation which can rest upon them.

More important, with Mrs Gandhi's death, the hitherto relatively peaceful coexistence of superpower interests on the political and economic terrain of India will be almost impossible to sustain, whether under Rajiv Gandhi's aegis, or anyone else's. Kept skilfully at arm's length from, and played off against, each other by Mrs Gandhi to the benefit of India (the real meaning of her 'non-alignment'), the subcontinent must now become more than ever the theatre of super-power rivalry, mayhem and interference.

A more open 'struggle for India' is a melancholy and violent prospect, which must dwarf all others. For it would pass beyond the routines of officially-sponsored paranoia, or of electoral sabre-rattling against Pakistan; no longer merely a matter of Rajiv Gandhi having a good war in an election season, since all such temptations must now represent a dangerous shot in the dark for India.

What is to be feared is nothing less than the gradual engulfing of a politically lamed nation by the now much more nervous and predatory geo-political ambitions in the region of the White House and the Kremlin. India, and the Indian people, can soak up a great deal both of internal political punishment — as Mrs Gandhi and the rulers of the Raj knew between them — and of every kind of external interference.

But legitimate defence anxieties about Pakistan's nuclear and other military capacity (funded in part from the huge global profits of its state-protected heroin manufacturing enterprises), the growing Indian Ocean presence of the US as its suzerainty over Sri Lanka progresses and Delhi's intricately divided dependencies upon the International Monetary Fund and on Soviet supplies of military hardware are less a Gordian knot than a tightening noose around India. Even effective sabre rattling, to say nothing of increasingly militarised control over the civilian population, needs sharper sabres than India now possesses.

But bland Rajiv, blooded in the Amritsar massacre and the attempted July overthrow (in the family tradition) of the non-satrap government of Andhra, has credentials potentially as good as any to rule what India has become since independence. Since it is now only in name a parliamentary system, he needs no parliamentary virtues.

Indeed, it would be a handicap if he possessed them. For the forces which nearly drove Mrs Gandhi from office in 1975 are still there, and capable of stirring. Moreover, the legacy which his slain mother on her pyre left him, however sweetened by the fragrance of sandalwood, is of a corruption which stinks to high heaven.

The trouble is that, though he is himself no Mr Clean, despite his manner, he is no thoroughgoing Kali either, fanged for destruction. And his private entourage, which will rule India with him if he survives the elections, is not yet comparable, in its corrupt blend of vice and virtue, with that of the fallen and increasingly unloved dictator. But he has astute handlers, and provided the still-vengeful Sikhs and his Congress enemies permit it, can gain the capacity to be the spider — albeit less mordant than the black widow who preceded him — at the centre of the Indian web in South Delhi. □

David Selbourne is Tutor in Politics, Ruskin College, Oxford, and the author of An Eye to India *(Penguin, 1977). His new book,* Against Socialist Illusion: A Radical Argument *will be published of this month by Macmillan.*

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CENTRAL AMERICA

WHAT THE LOCO WAR CANNOT DO

Claudia Wright on the battle Reagan may not win

Washington

'Loco', colloq. adj., from narcotic loco weed growing in southwestern US, Mexico, etc., whose leaves, when eaten by cattle, cause mad, violent behaviour.

PRESIDENT Reagan's re-election is not the mandate for the war in Central America the Administration would like to think. During the last weeks of the campaign Walter Mondale helped the President by matching him threat for threat against Nicaragua, while El Salvador's president, Napoleon Duarte, obliged with a diversionary meeting with the leaders of the Salvadoran insurgents. Despite bellicose electioneering, ample press reporting of administration plans to escalate US military involvement in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras, and two notable CIA casualties in action, the war did not become an issue in voters' minds, and fear of escalation appears to have subsided slightly in American public opinion.

Flush with election confidence and baying for a military victory, the Administration is on the threshold of the Loco War. But is it likely to be frustrated by the Congressional election results? Support for war in Central America will narrow in the Senate. It may disappear altogether, as has happened already in the House of Representatives, if Jesse Helms, the most Loco of the Republicans on the Foreign Relations Committee, takes over the chair. Republicans say they will try to repeal the War Powers Act to give the President greater freedom of military action, but the election hasn't changed enough Congressional seats for them to get away with it. They will be forced into the same pattern of escalation they have followed since 1981.

In Nicaragua, the covert campaign against the Sandinistas will be stepped up several notches. Despite the Congressional action to cut off CIA funding for the *Contras* until at least next March, the CIA is continuing to pay the salaries of its agents and contract personnel advising the *Contras* and handling their logistics, training and supply. Ammunition and arms for the *Contras* have already been stock-

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From a Central American Historical Institute (CIA) *Freedom Fighters' Manual* urging Nicaraguans to acts of sabotage. One way of winning over the local population

piled in ample numbers. The *Contras* and their CIA handlers have evaded the Congressional restrictions by obtaining the money to pay the guerillas from ostensibly private donations gathered in Miami and in Central America. Private American groups have also been mobilised to collect funds, clothing, boots, rifle sights and other guerrilla equipment, and fly them out of the US in contravention of US export control laws.

The Congress is cracking down on the use of US airforce transports to ship these supplies to the *Contras*, and the recruitment of US National Guardsmen and reservists to assist them may be barred by statute when Congress resumes. The use of CIA speedboats, small aircraft and sophisticated munitions has been tempered by public exposure but the agency will continue its clandestine operations from bases in Honduras and El Salvador, and rely on the new men in charge of the House and Senate intelligence committees to keep mum. For every loophole US opponents of the war expose and try to block, another is opened up.

ALTHOUGH Republican advocates of the anti-Sandinista war happily hint at the military options they have up their sleeves, no one believes that the *Contras* by themselves pose a genuine military challenge to the Sandinista government. In effect, they are being kept in reserve, as a symbol of the 'democratic Christian alternative' to the Sandinistas; the real damage is being inflicted directly by the US on Nicaragua's economy, while the internal conditions are prepared for a Chile-style revolt of the urban middle classes. The Reagan plan has already forced Nicaraguan sugar and beef exports out of the US market, halted low-interest loans from the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and other multilateral lenders, and nudged Mexico and Venezuela to raise the price of their oil shipments to Nicaragua.

The US economic quarantine against the Sandinistas has also extended to Europe. Classified Foreign Office papers of September 1982, when Francis Pym was Secretary of State, show that the US strategy has been to get Britain to stall European consideration of Nicaragua's economic plight, and block balance of payments aid from the European Community. A US National Security Council briefing paper, dated 31 October 1984, and leaked just after the Nicaraguan elections on 4 November suggests that British and West German notables will be recruited to attack the Sandinista election victory as a sham, and intensify public criticism of Managua in Europe. One objective of this campaign is to relieve the European pressure on Nicaragua's neighbours to accept the original terms of the Contadora treaty — the National Security Council paper confirms that the US has pressured El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala into reneging on their acceptance of the pact. A second objective is to cut the estimated $200 to $300 million in annual voluntary aid contributions, much of it from Western Europe, on which the Sandinistas rely; their largely inherited external debt is now about $3,000 million.

No one in Washington expects that the war against Nicaragua will produce a quick victory. But for the war in El Salvador there is a conflict among US officials and military officers over how fast to escalate US military involvement, and what kind of victories to aim at on the ground. A report in June by General John Singlaub — an officer of impeccable right-wing credentials after his dismissal by the Carter Administration from his post as commander of US forces in South Korea (see *NS* 2 November) — counseled against the kind of heavy fire-power and air war that General Paul Gorman, the head of US Army Southern Command, wants to fight. Gorman's present plans call for more than doubling the helicopter used by the Salvadoran army, as well as aircraft to be used for bombing and strafing runs. These planes will be flown, maintained and directed by 200 to 300 fresh US 'advisors' whom the Administration is expected to send over Congressional objections.

Despite the catastrophic failure of Gorman's tactics in the Salvadoran troops' first air-cavalry operation last month — which cost the lives of the Salvadoran army's senior field commanders in a helicopter crash — Gorman has the backing of State Department officials, Jeane Kirkpatrick at the UN, Robert McFarlane and Constantine Menges at the National Security Council, and Nestor Sanchez, the grand old man of CIA clandestine operations who is waging the last Western hemisphere war of his career as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. These people are determined to repeat the past American victories in South and Central America, and undo the long-suffered humiliation of the defeats in Cuba and Vietnam. They are convinced moreover that in Vietnam the US military tactics were right — it was the political loss of will in Congress and the White House that cheated the US of its victory.

These are the advocates of the Loco War, and to understand why their effort, no matter how expensive and bloody, is doomed to fail, it is essential to read the manual on counter-insurgency prepared by the CIA for the anti-Sandinista forces. For the CIA document, like the Singlaub report, acknowledges one thing the Loco Warriers will not concede — to win an American victory in El Salvador or Nicaragua requires an effective *political* challenge among the local population. Gorman's tactics are a repetition of Vietnam's — the military fire-power secures no territory and wins no hearts or minds. □

POLAND

CHURCH GAINING THE INITIATIVE

The murder of Father Popieluszko, the outspoken supporter of banned Solidarity, has created a major political crisis for the Polish authorities. Tony Paterson argues that the real advance is being made by the Catholic Church

Warsaw

A POLISH friend offered this remedy for his country's dilemma: 'We need to deport the entire Party Central Committee to Moscow and hold a 200-year moratorium on communism,' But then he added: 'After that we would only have the possibility of a totalitarian Catholic State to worry about.'

In a country where an estimated 80 per cent of the population are Catholics, there are more churches under construction than anywhere else in Europe and people queue up to get to mass, it is difficult not to exaggerate the strength of the Church. Two months after the government declared an amnesty for political prisoners that freed most of the leadership of the still outlawed Solidarity union, Poland's Catholic Church has resumed its old role as chief power broker with the government.

The main reasons for the Church's revival are the conditions of the government's political prisoner amnesty which have so far succeeded in gagging opponents of the regime. These state that former political prisoners who 'reoffend' over the next two years will be reimprisoned for longer terms. As a result the amnesty is really no more than release under suspended sentence. Poland has effectively been turned into an open prison for Solidarity activists. Churches and Church property are the only places where dissidents can meet without fear of arrest, so the Union's leadership has been obliged to look to the Church for protection as it is the only body strong enough to resist State repression.

The Church has complied on the basis that the union restrains its activities and keeps silent, but in doing so it has also pulled off a major coup in its own struggle for power with the authorities. The Church can now justifiably claim that it is the only body able effectively to control the Solidarity leadership without resorting to repression.

IT NOW APPEARS that a deal was reached shortly after the amnesty announcement during a little-publicised meeting between Solidarity leader Lech Walesa and Poland's Roman Catholic Primate Jozef Glemp. Walesa agreed to keep Solidarity on a tight leash and refrain from calling for anti-government protests. Glemp in return pledged to give Church support to Solidarity's central demand that the government permit trade union pluralism in Poland.

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Since that meeting, Walesa has issued appeals for calm that have been matched by Church demands that religious gatherings be 'de-politicised'. Nowhere was this more obvious than at a mass for workers at Jasna Gora monastery in southern Poland last month where monks addressing the 10,000-strong gathering suggested that the crowd take down the scores of red and white Solidarity banners on display.

Behind the Church's drive to create a climate of national calm is an attempt to win concessions from the government. Throughout Poland's 40-year post-war history the Church has harboured the long-term objective of gaining official recognition from the government — a concession which if eventually granted would make Poland's Catholic Church the first to be given legal status by a communist regime.

While Church-State talks remain in semi-permanent suspension, the Church now has a fresh concession it is anxious to extract from the government in an attempt to widen its power base. For the past two years is has had plans for a $900 million scheme to aid Poland's crippled private farming sector, which owns 75 per cent of all agricultural land in the country.

Under the scheme private farmers would be supplied with Western farm equipment with hard-currency raised by the Church in the West. The United States and the European Community have already agreed to contribute. Preliminary agreement for the scheme was reported to have been reached last month but the government is now said to be still considering whether to tax the Church on its imported hard currency. Such a scheme might at first appear insignificant, but if it is realised it would eventually allow the Church to wrest financial control of 75 per cent of Polish farmers from the government and substantially increase its support among the country's rural population.

WHERE DOES this leave Solidarity? Although the Church may have made overtures to the government about granting trade union pluralism in Poland (by which is meant a restoration of Solidarity in all but name), it is extremely unlikely that the authorities will ever agree to such a demand. The whole concept of 'pluralism' is vilified in the official media almost daily as an idea conceived by the opponents of Polish socialism and aimed at breaking Poland's alliance with the Soviet Union. The government's own spokesperson, Jerzy Urban, has repeatedly stressed that Solidarity is a thing of the past.

Meanwhile the authorities have been quick to show that they mean to enforce the terms of the amnesty to achieve what is officially dubbed 'normalisation'. In August freed underground Solidarity leaders Wladyslaw Frasyniuk and Jozef Pinior were arrested and reimprisoned for two months after attending a pro-union demonstration in the southern city of Wroclaw.

At the same time 22 former political offenders remain in jail despite the amnesty. These include prominent underground Solidarity leaders Bogdan Lis and Piotr Mierzewski, who are being held on treason charges. The official explanation is that the 22 have been cleared of their political offences under the amnesty but are now being held on criminal and terrorist charges not covered by the ruling.

Just as disturbing are the moves against forms of literary and artistic expression. In September the authorities decided to close down the premises of the 'theatre of the eight day' company because of its links with Solidarity. The company, which is well known for its radical and independent plays that were frequently critical of the authorities, has existed for 20 years in Poland. It is now confined to performing in churches where, like Solidarity, it will be out of sight, if not eventually out of mind. □

GERMANY

TV DIET — PAP OR NUTRITION?

Gitta Sereny on innovations and desperations in the media

ZDF, THE SECOND German television channel in Mainz, played host last month to 250 members of the German and foreign media. It was their eighteenth annual 'TV Critique' reunion.

There *was* open, fervent criticism, not only — rather bravely — from young firebrands who could have been forgiven for holding their fire in the presence of powerful superiors, but also from (albeit retired) former high-level administrators; and from producer-directors who were doubtlessly putting their next projects at risk when they spoke with passion of the need for less entertainment, less dry news, and more serious documentaries, plays, really informed commentators and panel discussions. They called for TV — adapted investigative journalism — the old *Sunday Times* Insight team was mentioned time and again as a standard to which they could aspire.

TV at present, they said, provided too much pre-digested information: it absolved people from the necessity to think. Instead, by both trivialising and over-dramatising issues, it blunted people's feelings and reduced both their willingness and their capacity to confront reality when presented seriously. TV, they said, was creating a society where everyone was informed about everything — but on the lowest possible level. A disturbing sense of *déja vu* for a journalist from Britain.

The TV bosses in Mainz assured those who were begging for more quality TV that viewing figures in Germany (and indeed the whole Western world) confirmed that the vast majority of viewers wanted above all light entertainment: light feature films, plastic series, sports, and, wedged in between, news reports concentrating primarily on home news. As for the young — the 14 to 20-year-olds — in the opinion of these opinion-makers 'they turn off anything that requires them to use their heads'.

Given the disillusioned attitude of the television decision-makers, it was a creditable gesture to focus the three-day meeting on the world premiere of Eberhard Fechner's 4½ hour film of the Majdanek trial. Produced by NDR, the North German television channel in Hamburg, co-sponsors of the conference, it was filmed entirely during the 5½-year-long trial (and the three years while appeals were heard) of the SS guards, two men and two women, who were eventually sentenced to long prison terms.

The film is a unique endeavour in the history of documentaries, virtually dispensing with commentary. The people who appear are the accused, the victims, the prosecutors and lawyers, the judges, social workers and — very important to Fechner — spectators, both children and adults.

The idea behind this mammoth undertaking was to record, for the first and last time — for this represented the end of Nazi trials in Germany — how German justice coped with the near-impossible task of trying criminals decades after the crimes were committed.

Der Prozess will be screened on Germany's elitist Third channel only (a cause for much anger at the conference) on three evenings in late November. But Fechner's 230 hours of film — an unprecedented decision — will be kept in the Federal Archives in Koblenz for future historians. 'My model for this undertaking', said Fechner, 'was a letter Anton Chekhov wrote in 1888 to a friend. "The artist", he wrote, "must not be the judge of his characters, only a dispassionate witness. Judgment is up to the jury, i.e. the readers. My job is to deploy my capacity to differentiate between significant and insignificant statements and to put them into context, one to the other".'

This, to this writer too, seems the true goal of journalism, whether in newspapers, books, or filmed documentaries. The question before us — and put very deliberately before the assembly in Mainz is whether today's viewing, or reading public wants and can assimilate the kind of presentation which rejects the obvious and facile.

The film contains protracted pauses, watching faces minute after silent minute; long obviously unedited sentences which finally reveal the underlying lie; fluent descriptions of horrors, unbelievable until the flow of words stops, the self-control crumbles and the camera remains, still, on the tears, the visible aging as memories are re-lived.

It was an extraordinary occasion. At the end of the screening in Mainz there was only silence, with everyone remaining almost motionless in their seats, until, still silent, they went home.

The discussion the next morning, though, could not live up to the complex emotions the film had evoked. In Britain and elsewhere, strangely enough, the experience may well strengthen the determination of documentary film makers to adopting Fechner's uncompromising approach to historical issues. But this was Germany, where the subject of Hitler's monstrosities still lies unresolved in the national conscience.

The young and some of the much older — those of the World War II generation who had so ardently argued for depth and complexity in television — felt bolstered in their stand. But one felt, sadly, that the others — who at the end of the day commission projects, approve programming and sign the cheques — will continue to think that the public they claim to understand, wants only the aneasthetic of *Dallas* and titillatingly dramatised or acceptably sanitised news. □

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LETTERS

Left and Right: who's green?

Ann Pettitt, Dyfed, Wales

The authors of the article 'The greening of the NF' (*NS* 26 October) on the recent right-wing espousal of 'ecological' issues are correct to point out a lack of practical realism on the part of the Ecology Party and some 'ecofeminist' groups, particularly over the question of our urban and industrial heritage. But their own conclusion seems as vaguely wishful as the notions they criticise.

Surely if the right-wing political parties are trying on for size the ecological approach — clearly recognising its vote-catching potential — what this should do is make those with power and influence on the Left wake up to the global and long-term perspective required, as well as recognise the genuine concern among the electorate aroused by all those woolly-hatted groups. I watched the debate on the environment at this year's Labour conference. There was plenty of right-sounding rhetoric from the platform, but most of it seemed abysmally shallow.

But the Labour Party could be showing, with a simplicity and clarity that have long been lacking in basic policy direction, that you can't have real ecological policies without democratic public control of private greed. The jungle of capitalist competition is anti-ecological by its very nature. So also is the tightly-centralised bureaucratic State geared to industrialism at all costs. It's not really the 'green' movement that's unrealistic so much as the Right in claiming that it can make eco policies work. However, to make this clear, the men who presently monopolise ideas on 'the Left' would have to do some serious thinking and give a rather better quality of attention to the issues raised by 'fringe' groups.

What is needed is a programme, in fact, for a transition to the kind of long-term sustainable society that would put socialism into a context in which it might begin again to make sense — not least of all to the urban poor. Surely the authors of the 'Blueprint for Survival' are right to talk about 'restraint'. Call it 'eco-police-State' if you like, but how can pollution — and the biggest polluters are often the biggest business concerns — be controlled without State legislation and strict enforcement? How can agriculture incorporate conservation without a change in the farming subsidy system and without incentives to small mixed farms? How can we have long-term cropping of hardwood forests which could also be a resource for popular recreation, unless the public through the government owns the forests?

Or look at the food industry — here again, policies which would encourage healthier eating can hardly be enacted without greater, not less, control by the State over the profit-making industries; and the alternatives to the mass industry in 'junk food' will remain small-scale and fringe unless they do receive positive encouragement from a more enlightened government.

No matter how much the Tories may try to look as though they've got mud on their wellies, lambs in their arms and tits in the nest-boxes, the giant corporations and a greedy 'defence' industry will always call their tune. The ecological perspective provides a challenge to traditional 'Left' thinking which has certainly not been taken up on anything like the scale and depth necessary to fight the next election successfully. But until those who make policy decisions in the Labour Party do take up this challenge, ecological socialist feminism will remain an indigestible mouthful for all of us.

Paul Elkins, co-chair Ecology Party Council

By treating the NF's supposed 'greening' as a significant politico-philosophical event, Sarah Benton and Rob Edwards give the Front a surprising amount of credibility. Wouldn't a less convoluted explanation be that these violent racists are trying to broaden their political appeal by jumping on a green bandwagon that is proving increasingly attractive to political opportunists from all parties?

It's a pity, though, that the article's authors have felt the need to massage the facts in order to justify the points they wish to make about the Ecology Party. On health, housing and education, the ECO Manifesto is said to 'ignore the issue of who owns such provisions'. May I quote: 'There should be more emphasis on small, well-staffed community hospitals', 'Educational provision would be comprehensive, co-educational and equally available to all', 'Council tenants would be offered their homes on a Trust Holding Scheme, which would give them the freedom of home-ownership without the community losing its precious housing stock' (pp.31-33).

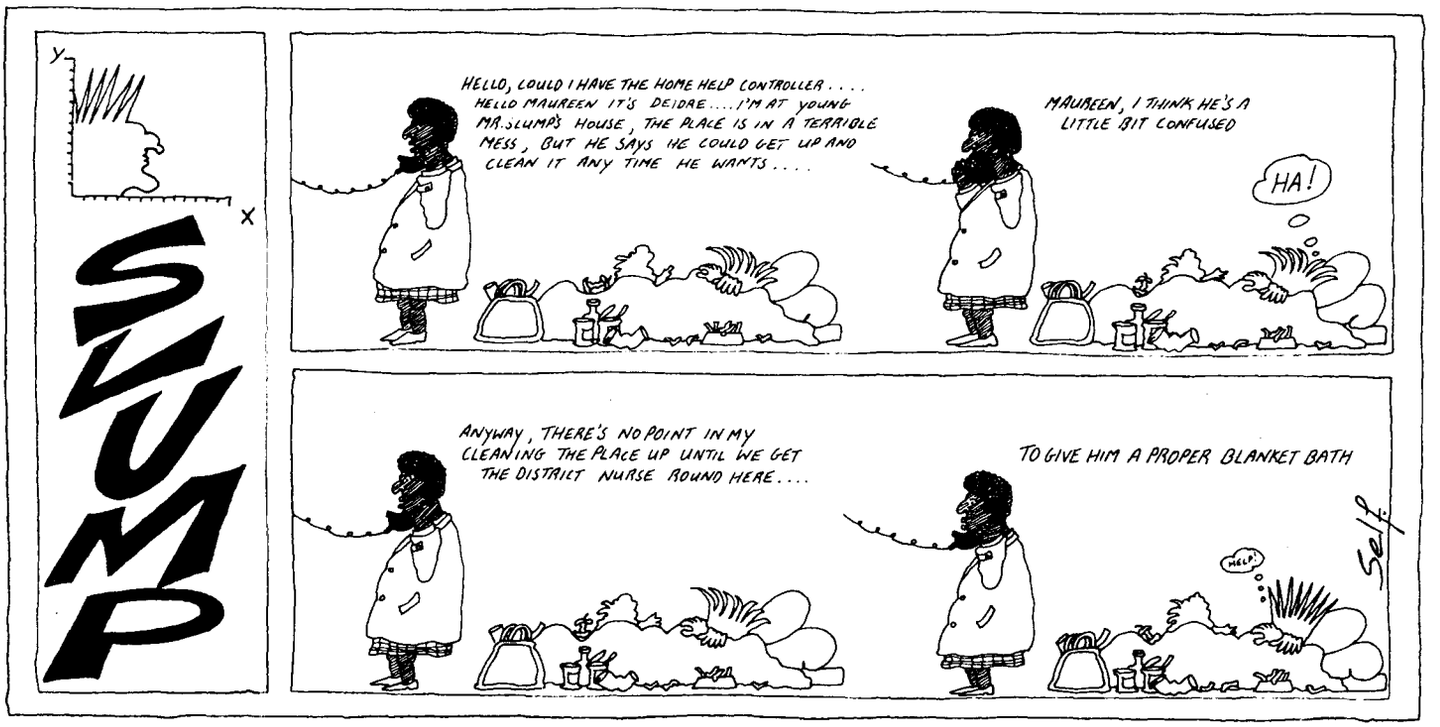
As for the Manifesto being 'silent on actual State institutions', that is simply a breathtakingly inaccurate statement — Parliament, the House of Lords, District Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the NHS, the Housing the Arts Fund and British Rail all appear on just two pages, while all the 'power operating bodies' identified by the authors as being 'opposed to the ecological imperative' are either confronted directly or by implication in the Manifesto, contrary to the impression given. The *New Statesman* deserves better reporting which doesn't stoop to controversial 'quotes' from a 'prominent member', who is not identified, which gives neither the member concerned nor the Party a chance to deny the attribution or correct any false impression.

Immigration racism

Fiona Mactaggart, General Secretary, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

The suggestion by A. Cotton (Letters 2 November) that discrimination against nationals of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Ghana at British ports is because citizens of these countries have a propensity to write anonymous letters to the Home Office about each other is ludicrous. It provides no explanation of the clear pattern of racial bias in the treatment of visitors to Britain; a passenger from Africa or the Indian sub-continent is 35 times more likely to be turned away as a passenger from North America.

The only evidence which could begin to justify this pattern is that which would show a greater likelihood that people from these countries would overstay their leave. The Home Office abandoned its study of overstaying four years ago, but we understand it did not support generalisations about


Y
X
SLUMP
HELLO, COULD I HAVE THE HOME HELP CONTROLLER . . . . HELLO MAUREEN IT'S DEIDRE . . . . I'M AT YOUNG MR. SLUMP'S HOUSE, THE PLACE IS IN A TERRIBLE MESS, BUT HE SAYS HE COULD GET UP AND CLEAN IT ANY TIME HE WANTS . . . .
MAUREEN, I THINK HE'S A LITTLE BIT CONFUSED
HA!
ANYWAY, THERE'S NO POINT IN MY CLEANING THE PLACE UP UNTIL WE GET THE DISTRICT NURSE ROUND HERE . . . .
TO GIVE HIM A PROPER BLANKET BATH
HELP!
Self

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the tendency of particular nationalities to evade control.

A. Cotton also suggests that the law is generously weighted in favour of those in breach of the Immigration Act who choose to remain silent. In fact police and immigration officers have extensive powers of arrest without warrants and many of those arrested can be imprisoned and removed from the country without any right to bail, trial, or appeal.

Jolyon Jenkins's original article provided a unique insight into the behaviour of those who are entrusted with the responsibility of administering Britain's immigration controls. The accuracy of his account is borne out by experience of representing thousands of people who have known at first hand the racism of Britain's immigration laws and practices.

For whom the dreaming spires?

Alan Lipman, Webb School of Architecture, Cardiff

Commenting on the vistas of the National Gallery from Pall Mall and the Strand, your Jules Lubbock commends 'the romantic English love for towers, domes, columns and steeples' (*NS* 26 October). One's thoughts go immediately to Cornish tin miners, to Welsh hill farmers, to Belfast ship-yard workers, to Highlands crofters. Perhaps, though, they all lack English sensibilities; as might London dockers, Fenland farm labourers . . . But who are all these to English gentlemen, folk whose schooled susceptibilities run deep — privilege deep?

What makes a coalition?

Cllr John Tilley, Members' Room, Guildhall, Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames

The *New Statesman* rightly attacks bias in the Tory tabloids and elsewhere in the media. It should as a result be more careful to avoid misleading its own readers. In an otherwise useful piece on local government finance (*NS* 12 October) Tony Travers is guilty of at best sloppy journalism or at worst a deliberate attempt to mislead. Three local authorities are grouped together in the article — Brighton, Hammersmith and Waltham Forest. They are said to be controlled by Conservative-Liberal coalitions.

'Coalition' has a fairly clear and distinctive definition. This might be considered a fair description where two political parties have combined temporarily to administer on an *agreed programme*. If Tony Travers believes this is what is happening in the authorities listed he is wrong. Would he or the *New Statesman* describe those councils run by Liberals with minority Labour support as coalitions? Would those Councils left to Conservative control because Labour failed to support the Liberals be coalitions? More to the point what about those councils where Labour and Conservatives connive together, are they Con-Lab coalitions? I think we should be told.

Woman's work, man's hobby

Marion Bowman, London, SW4

Dr James LeFanu (*NS* 2 November) managed to work himself up into a right old lather about my article on food. What a pity that he completely missed the point. He seems too obsessed with shooting down the NACNE report to understand that far from propagandising on its behalf I was suggesting that there's more to food as a political issue than nutrition education — the 'don't eat this, don't eat that' debate (or in the Dr Lefanu version 'do eat this, do eat that').

What about income (and not just as a health indicator), relations within the family, the structure of the food retailing industry or current government welfare policy reforms? It seems to me that the Manchester Polytechnic Food Survey, in the tradition of Rowntree, Booth and the Co-operative Women's Guild, might throw some light on all this and save us all — perhaps even the crusading Dr LeFanu — from getting bogged down in yet another long argy-bargy about the nature of scientific evidence and stimulate instead a debate about things like shopping, women's time and yes, the joy of food — but whose exactly? I don't think a pensioner gets much joy out of a bag of stale doughnuts at 20p a time.

Incidentally being a Northerner I get immense joy from black pudding. I like it best when it is so black even the white bits are black. But really, Dr LeFanu, 'the subtlety and infinite variety of the kitchen' sounds like the 'cooking as woman's work and a man's hobby' school of thought. And *there*'s something else for the food debaters to get their teeth into.

FEEDBACK

Exploiting the greens

IN THE EARLY '70s the distinguished Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coined the distinction between 'shallow ecology' and 'deep ecology'. Reading the recent article by Sarah Benton and Rob Edwards, 'The greening of the NF' (*NS* 26 October), one begins to realise just how important such a distinction is likely to prove. For we already find politicians all across the political spectrum using the word 'green' to suit purposes of their own.

At one level, the article was a rather regrettable attempt to blame the Ecology Party and other greens for the fact that the NF is trying to jump aboard this superficially green bandwagon. Eco-fascism is both imaginable and theoretically workable; it is right that we should confront it. Yet how many socialists like to be held responsible for the many totalitarian and repressive practices still carried out in the name of socialism? Looked at from this perspective, is it not convincing evidence that the greens have indeed 'come of age' when our ideas and beliefs, like those of libertarian socialists, are often corrupted and abused by those whom we abhor?

At a deeper level, the article laid bare many of the reasons why those who talk of a merging of the red and the green may be a little premature in their prognostications. The notion that one is only engaging in 'real politics' if one sees things exclusively in terms of the class war between labour and capital strikes many greens today as a peculiarly inadequate and even archaic analysis.

The benefits of today's industrialism are only achieved by the ruthless exploitation of both the people and the resources of the planet. To warble on about liberating the people without simultaneously emphasizing the need to liberate ourselves from the suicidal exploitation of finite resources, means that one hasn't begun to grasp the realities of ecology — let alone its politics. When socialist orthodoxy declares that production is '*the* fundamental human activity', and that we can only achieve our full potential by producing and consuming more, particularly in the already over-developed industrial world, then it becomes manifestly clear that today's exploiters are no more located in one specific class than are the powerless and the exploited.

To claim that natural resources are 'neutral' is therefore as turgid a truism as to say that technology is neutral. In terms of 'real politics', it is surely meaningless to distinguish between natural resources and the way in which they are used or abused. Is Mrs Thatcher making a neutral decision in opting for uranium rather than coal? Is the dilemma of hundreds of thousands of Third World Villagers, forced to use all available timber as firewood even though their subsistence and their very survival may depend on their not using it, one that we should view neutrally?

One must dig a little deeper to find the root of the problem. Many socialists remain extremely squeamish at the central green concept of *reverence for the Earth*. (It's almost as if they'd never heard of Gerard Winstanley or of the many inspiring threads of socialism before it abstracted itself from the understanding that *all* wealth ultimately derives from the earth!) It was, for example, fascinating to see how ill at ease Benton and Edwards felt at some of the links between ecology and feminism, dismissing as 'mushy mysticism' the idea that women are more subtly and intensely aware of the dis-ease of contemporary industrialism, and of the need to restore balance in our own relationships by simultaneously restoring balance in our relationship with the Earth. The problem goes right back to the mechanistic and reductionist world view of industrialism, and the way in which its dominant values repress us all.

One suspects that their rejection of eco-feminism is just another facet of a deeper disinclination to acknowledge any spiritual or metaphysical dimension to people's lives. They are especially scathing at the notion that spirituality has anything to do with 'real politics'. It seems that one of the hardest lessons for some socialists to come to terms with is the impoverishment that has resulted from so thoroughly secularizing our society.

But if this is still not the stuff of real politics, then let us return to their own definition of it as 'a system of power operated by particular interests through definable institutions and networks'. Does this not reveal the hidden yet all-pervading assumption that politics is something to be practised by the few and passively consumed by the rest of us? They parenthetically mock the idea that 'ecologists are strong on local roots'. Absolutely right! And how sad that mainstream socialism has lost *its* understanding of the sense and significance of *place*, both politically, in terms of its failure to embrace radical decentralism, and culturally, in its scorn for the concept of community. One doesn't have to be a member of some blood brotherhood to realise that local roots have a great deal to do with what makes life rewarding. Moreover, to put people before institutions, life interests before class interests, common sense before ideology and survival wisdom before myopic materialism, is not to reject politics: it is to demonstrate the primacy of politics in a rather different way. It is hardly surprising that such politics should jar with what today still prevails as mainstream socialism, but to assume that such socialism has much in common with genuine green politics is about as shallow an assumption as to assume that the National Front are going green.

Jonathon Porritt

Jonathon Porritt is the Director of Friends of the Earth.

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THE CAPTIVE IMAGE

When you point your camera and press the button what exactly are you trying to do? And who decides what you see of the rest of the world? Simon Watney argues that together the photographic industry and Fine Art establishment have narrowed our vision of ourselves and the world to an extent that impoverishes us all

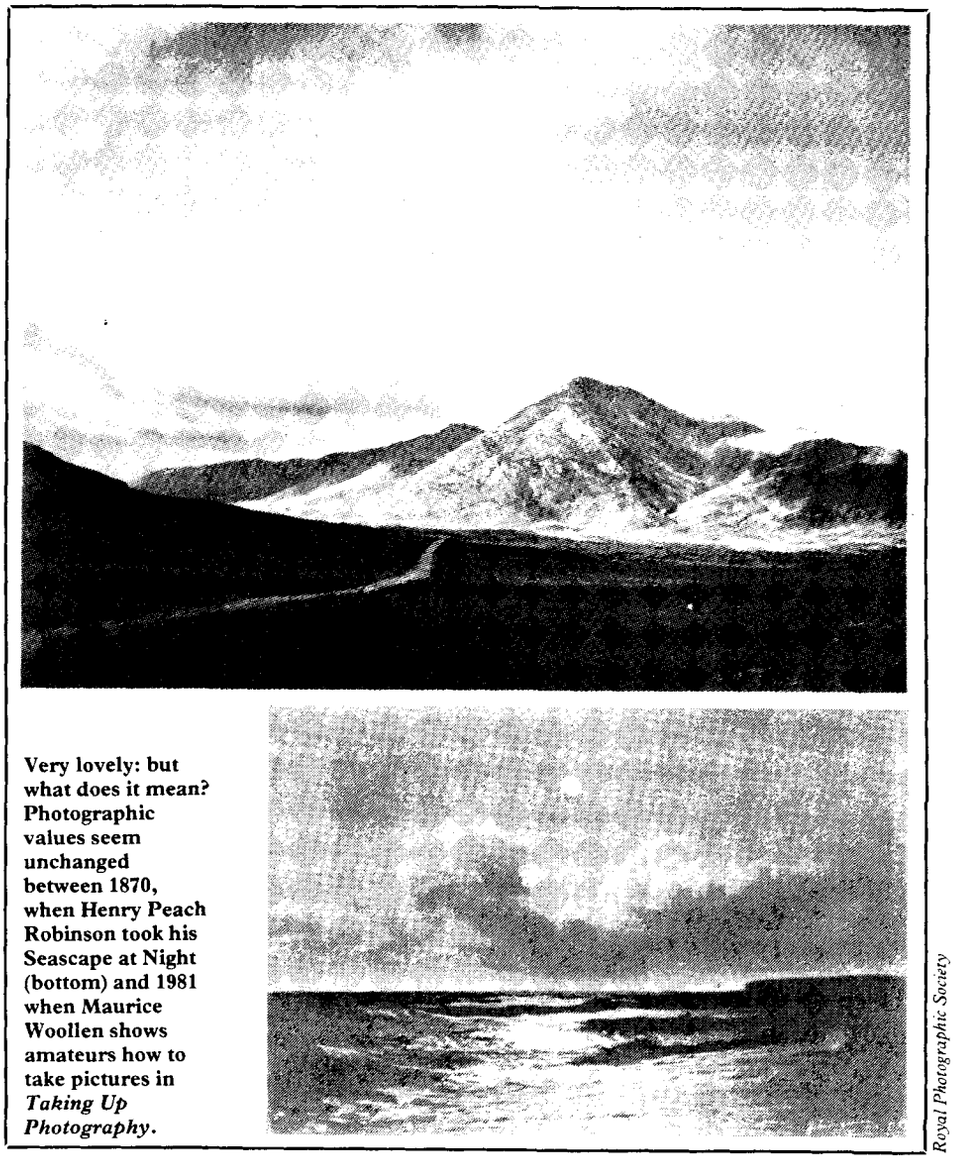
IT WAS ALMOST certainly Brecht who originated an aphorism, made popular by the critic Walter Benjamin in the '30s, that the illiterate of the future would not be the person who cannot read, but the one who cannot take a photograph. Taken at face value this might seem a prophetic observation. It all depends, however, on what you mean by taking a photograph.

Ever since Kodak launched their lightweight box camera in 1888 with the slogan: 'You press the button, we do the rest', the photographic market has been deeply divided between the ever-increasing number of people who passively consume simple photographic equipment, and the more specialised market of amateur and professional photography, where some degree of control over the whole process is still exercised. The enormous sales of the popular photographic market guarantee that while indeed more people are pressing the button, fewer than ever are able to do 'the rest'.

The degree of monopoly control over the world market in both photographic film and the popular instamatic and disc-cameras is extraordinary. Five companies — the American Eastman Kodak, Japanese Fuji-photo, Cannon and Konishiroku and the West German Agfa Gevaert — dominate the market, and it's a fast expanding trade. In the UK, total sales in the photographic industry (film, cameras, and development and processing) increased from £260 million in 1976 to £565 million in 1982. Such sales are based on the endless reproduction of a relatively few familiar images.

The separation between the mass and the professional market produces its own institutions. Leaving aside news photography, which has its own clear codes, the world of professional photography is institutionalised in copyright laws, educational training, and in its criticism and historical accounts of itself — the 'history of photography'. This last invariably omits any reference either to the popular market or the role of the industry itself.

On the other side we can see the complete loss of control over the finished photo in the highly lucrative development and processing trade, where a cut-throat war has been raging for some years. We catch a glimpse of its size in the recent introduction of computerised envelopes inside which our snapshots come back to us, and in the latest processing machines which can churn out some 20,000 prints an hour. Originally, the wholesale switch to colour photography was sparked off by the artificial rise in prices in the speculative international silver markets, which rendered silver based black and white processing insufficiently profitable. This has served, however, to create a radical separation between black and white, and colour processing in the popular market, locking the consumer ever more securely in the grip of the industry. Such is the competition to get to this market that while the value of sales of cameras in the UK went up by 20 per cent from 1980 to 1982, in development and processing (D&P) it



Very lovely: but what does it mean? Photographic values seem unchanged between 1870, when Henry Peach Robinson took his Seascape at Night (bottom) and 1981 when Maurice Woollen shows amateurs how to take pictures in *Taking Up Photography*.

Royal Photographic Society

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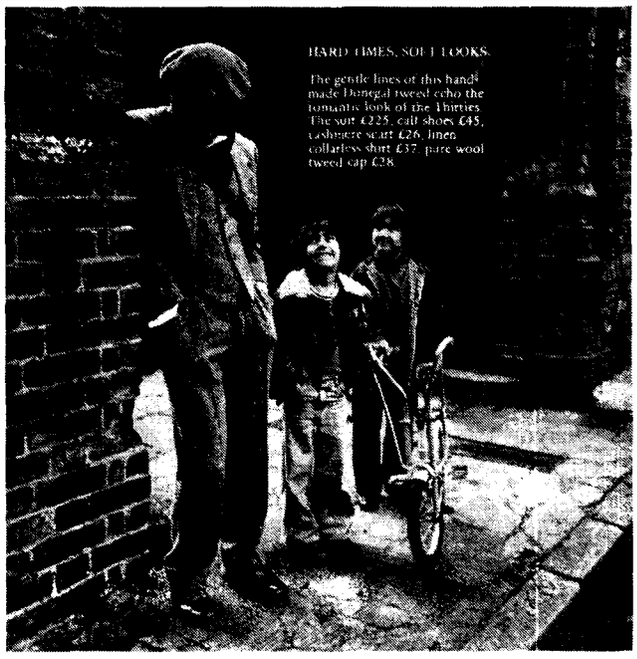
HARD TIMES, SOFT LOOKS.
The gentle lines of this hand-made Donegal tweed echo the romantic look of the Thirties. The suit £225, calf shoes £45, cashmere scarf £26, linen collarless shirt £37, pure wool tweed cap £28.

Far left: Bert Hardy's image of unemployment in Wigan in 1938. Today, if it doesn't look like this, we don't recognise unemployment. It is so stripped of social meaning, that Gloria Chambers's montage (left) says the image is of style alone.

was only 2.3 per cent.

This brings us back to what we mean by 'taking photographs'; for perhaps the money involved alone goes some way to explaining why so much emphasis is placed on the exposure of film, and so little on the actual making or use of photographs. For the fact remains that photography is degraded not simply in the *quality* of images pumped out daily from the D&P factories, such as Grunwick's, so quaintly described as laboratories, but in the bizarre situation in which a technology which can easily be learned by anyone in an afternoon remains so securely in the hands of so few people.

PURSUING BRECHT'S metaphor of literacy, it is clear that anyone can 'take' a photograph. What is at stake is the way in which photography is used in our everyday lives, the power of photography to define both our picture of our relations with other people and, at the same time, with our most intimate selves. The steady process of technological standardisation since the last war was inseparable from the business competition to get monopoly control of the popular market place. That in turn is inseparable from the standardisation of images which we are encouraged to reproduce in the name of 'good' photography, whether for amateur or professional purposes, or the relative privacy of our own personal or family albums. Our most individual and treasured pictures come in a standard format from an unseen and remote factory. We use cameras to record happy families and groups (when what mattered at the time may have been loneliness or discord) and places that say only 'I was there', as if that immediately exhausted the possibilities of what we might do with our cameras.

If contemporary uses of photography seem impoverished and monotonous, the explanation lies not simply in an analysis of the organisation of the industry, but in the question of what we think photography does, or more important still, does not do. For what happens when we go out to buy the latest disc camera as a Christmas present in the next few weeks is that we in effect purchase the conditions for making ourselves unpaid technicians of a photographic company and the passive functionaries of the local D&P industry. It is with all the ironies of this situation that we should consider the work of those contemporary photographers who reject the whole caboodle of institutionalised photographic wisdom, and are asking what photography actually is and might become.

As soon as we start looking behind the familiar snapshot or the costly 'art' photo, we see the extraordinary poverty of photographic criticism, in all branches of which the experts strenuously and enthusiastically exhort us to 'take' exactly the same pictures as our grandparents took. Teachers and manuals of photographic techniques chorus the notion of what 'good' photography looks like — Dad in a deckchair with a hankie over his head, sunsets over Venice (preferably with a gondola or two), white fences under snow, a bum on a bed with a curtain . . . Again and again we are steered towards images of maximum 'aesthetic' significance (defined in terms of tonality, composition etc) and a minimum of social significance. Our sheer familiarity with this regime of images tends to inure most people to its spectacular banality, its obsessive repetitions and its gaping absences.

This is at least as true of the so-called 'masters' of photography, extolled in the histories of the medium, as of ourselves. In this respect we need to appreciate the remarkable power of particular curators working in particular institutions (for example, John Szarkowski at the Museum of Modern Art in New York) in dictating which photographers and which types of photography get exhibited, written about, and held up as models of indisputable excellence to us all.

IT IS NOT surprising then that instead of a public able to question and expand its view of the world through photography we have on the contrary a mass illiteracy concerning photographic imagery. With perception and invention made subservient to the 'right' way of taking pictures, the photographic industry has successfully determined what photography is. The medium for establishing and conveying this 'common sense' concerning photography is a host of publications which share the same lowest common denominator of financial dependence on the photographic companies via advertising revenue, often disguised as competitions, judged and evaluated by the same 'experts' who write both the manuals and histories of photography.

Hence the significance of the decision earlier this year by the Yorkshire Arts Association (YAA) to cut off funds from the Pavilion Photographic Gallery in Leeds. Not a decision to make the national headlines perhaps, but one which matters very much for the possibilities for enlarging the sense and practice of what photography could become. It also throws into sharp relief the differences between those who retain the power to define the medium as a primarily if not exclusively aesthetic medium and those who are

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struggling to extend its educational potential — its very vision of itself.

The Pavilion project was set up in Leeds some years ago as the first specifically feminist photographic centre in Europe. Its original objectives were threefold: the development of an exhibition programme designed to bring the work of women photographers to the north of England; and educational policy which would encourage more people to become aware of the politics and sexual politics of photographic practice; and the teaching of practical skills, especially to women and to black people. Since the Pavilion opened its doors last year it has been notably successful in all three of these objectives. Yet it was precisely in relation to the initial achievement of these aims that the gallery has had its financial life-support system cut off.

To begin with, the YAA objected to what it described as 'the aesthetic content' of its exhibition programme, although this included shows which had already been seen at London's Hayward and Riverside galleries as well as work by local women and such individual photographers as Jo Spence and Brenda Prince. To the extent that the gallery received publicity and acclaim in the local press, in *Spare Rib* and *Over 21*, the gallery was deemed to be failing. Its work and policies had begun to be widely known, but not by those institutions of the Fine Art press which the YAA is evidently eager to impress.

The gallery was also branded as 'separatist' because at certain times in the week its dark-rooms were only open to women, while its successful organisation of evening classes and day conferences on topics like women's art and the ways in which the disabled are represented in mainstream photography led to complaints from the YAA that the Pavilion was becoming a 'women's centre' rather than a gallery. Public money, it was stated, should not go to 'minority groups' (like women?). In other words, the work of the Pavilion was assessed against criteria which were starkly incompatible with its own objectives, criteria which reinforce that same 'common sense' view of photography which derives so directly from the marketing strategy of the industry and its various mouth-pieces, endlessly promoting the aesthetic over the social as the standard of what is both useful and meaningful.

It is highly significant that photography has become such an important site for feminist cultural intervention. Feminist photographers are particularly sceptical of that Fine Art tradition of which the Museum of Modern Art is the prime mover, and Britain's Arts Council a subservient trustee. Faced with the rejection of social and political concerns as 'non-artistic', the women's movement has stimulated the most coherent critique to date of how photography works in our society.

Feminist photographers have now come into direct conflict with the established values, aesthetic and financial, of photography. Those values inform and regulate the dominant 'system of representations', which is marketed almost as a by-product of photographic equipment. Not surprisingly the institutions of commercial photography — educational courses, galleries, magazines, publishers, financing agencies and so on — are unlikely to encourage a movement which does question every aspect of a medium which has remained for so long a wealthy and expanding sector of the market economy.

It is clear that photography used by feminists or any other group who question how social reality is represented cannot be reconciled with the prevailing criteria of the institutions of photography. We might, for example, contrast the faith in the supposedly intrinsic 'truthfulness' of photography which lies behind so much traditional documentary practice, and the work of such contemporary photographers as Jo Spence or Mitra Tabrizian. So engrained is our notion of documentary style, learned from the work in the '30s of Walker, Evans, Bill Brandt and others, that we no longer recognise the problem of unemployment because it doesn't physically resemble our photographic preconceptions. In the work of Spence, Tabrizian, and many others, it is not assumed that photographs simply record some given reality; rather, the ways in which photography *produces* its own coded view of the world are emphasised and brought to our attention.

ONE OF THE most important and precious legacies of the sexual politics movement of the '70s remains this emphasis on the role of visual representation in establishing and spreading social identities, especially those of minority groups. What is the connection between our own lived experience, and the images offered in our society to make sense of it? In this dialogue between the larger political issues of public representation and the psychic processes at work in the making of our own, subjective, identities the women's movement has led the way.

In effect, feminist photography has generated an entire cultural movement. From its special concern with issues of pleasure, fantasy and desire, it can look at how our inner lives are regulated through photography. Feminist photography does not question the existence of aesthetic responses to photographs, but it does constantly draw attention to the problems which occur when aesthetic responses are upheld to the virtual exclusion of all others.

Because photography — unlike, say, film-making or television — is potentially available to all of us, it is timely that it has emerged as such an important ground for cultural conflict. This is why it is so serious that a centre of international significance in the history of photographic exhibition and education should have received no funding since March. The photographic gallery space was closed in August, and without heating or lighting the educational programme has ground to a standstill. The darkrooms are almost entirely out of action. This is the revenge which the Fine Art establishment is able to exert against those photographers who transgress dismally narrow definitions of 'officially' legitimate photographic practice. If a feminist photographic gallery were not a women's centre, what would it be? Certainly not an agency for stimulating precisely that photographic literacy which Brecht anticipated with such melancholy optimism more than half a century ago. □

Simon Watney is a lecturer in communications at the Polytechnic of Central London.

Brenda Prince (Format)

Women at the Leeds Pavilion Gallery — official funding now cut off

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Hooked again

Naomi Mitchison

Eric Linklater
MICHAEL PARNELL *John Murray* £16

IT IS VERY awkward for any writer who starts with a success, the heady praise, the sales, the admiration and then lives on, writing as well or perhaps better, into a period when fashions and admirations have changed. They have become old-fashioned and boring. Above all their gift — and it happens just as much to those in the other arts — is not accepted, even when it is their heart's blood. It is an accident if one of the new generation opens one of these old books and finds that, after all, it's great.

That was what happened to Eric Linklater. This biography, which shows it, covers almost half a century of writing and, of course, of what was happening to the author, for he was never one for an ivory tower. His early and middle periods were varied, full and often brilliantly successful, though naturally the work he most valued was seldom the critics' choice. Michael Parnell obviously loved writing about him and is angry at the present under-valuation of his hero. He tells a good story and gets so close to the man himself that he manages — rather strangely for someone who wasn't even old enough to be involved in the last war — to realise what the first war did and meant to Eric.

My brother, whom a few elderly people perhaps remember as Bomber Haldane, was in the third Battalion of the Black Watch, already with two years' service in the hideousness of Flanders when Private Linklater, having taken a year off his age, joined the fourth Battalion, just in time for the last part of the battle of Passchendaele. The Black Watch were in the worst of the fighting; only the very lucky ones were wounded sufficiently to be got back to hospital — luck one — and to stay there long enough — luck two — to survive. Most of Eric's friends were killed, as mine and my brother's were, the young and intelligent who might have been in power in the Thirties, enough to make things happen differently. Lance-Corporal Linklater was a sniper, working on his own at the job of killing people, just as my brother crawled out of his trench to chuck his bombs into the trench opposite across no-mans-land, and observe the results.

You can't do this without it having a very definite effect. It made them both deeply anti-war, but also deeply attached to their fellow soldiers, the dead with the living. But this hate and pride and love had to have sharp laughter in it or it would break you. I think this comes very clear in Eric's magnificent anti-war novel *Private Angelo*.

After the war the reaction and also the writing began. He had given up his early start in medicine; it left no trace. He went into journalism, to begin with in India, for which he had little sympathy. Then back to Scotland; Aberdeen and Edinburgh were his stamping grounds and he was really an intolerable young man; I would have smacked his face if I had met him then instead of years later when he was totally charming and serious — or almost serious. He inhabited Orkney too, but perhaps more for strenuous play, on sea, up hills and into bogs, than for writing, though Orkney history and landscape were a perpetual background.

His skirmishings with publishers are fascinating. Like me, he was a Cape's author, or perhaps one should say a Garnett find. Eric realised quickly what a marvellous friend Garnett was for a young writer, but found

Camera Press

Eric Linklater: intolerable, charming, funny, gifted, complicated

Jonathan less attractive, even though he probably escaped the bottom-pinching which was fairly usual when female authors were concerned. Others joined the firm and on the whole Eric got a fair deal and much encouragement.

Juan in America was a huge success, but the most interesting of these early books are all deeply Scottish. He didn't really like London or the sometimes exhausting London entertainments; he came back to find Scotland working out a new sense of nationality, partly literary, partly political with a distinct shedding of phony romanticism. He had begun to think of what the world ought to be like as well as how funny it was. Anyone who wants to understand the making of Scottish nationalism should read *Magnus Merriman*, remembering that the author was actually born in Wales, but what the hell.

He went on to write a remarkable variety of books, novels, short stories, history, plays and some interesting early radio. He was in the grip of words and here Michael Parnell's critical sense is important, for words often ran away with Eric, much as his love affairs seemed to do. Luckily he met up with his equal in the last game. He would have been destroyed by a wife who gave in to him; Marjorie never did, even when he was intolerably rude. She hit back and that was totally the right thing. It was a marvellous marriage and the children they both wanted escaped because they soon realised that his terrible furies were really part of a story which could turn equally into a glorious fairyland. This comes through in a delightfully frank foreword by his younger son.

Eric Linklater loved Orkney. It is a magic place and he responded to it, just as he responded to paintings, to heroes, whether now or in the past, and to certain kinds of beauty. He loved to make complicated plots for his books and to complicate his life. All this comes out. Perhaps Michael Parnell even gets over-enthusiastic, so caught up is he with his subject. I'm not sure. It made me get hold of my two or three un-borrowed (they have a habit of disappearing) books by Eric Linklater, and once I got into them, there I was, hooked again. □

New waves

M. H. Ryle

Acid Rain in the UK and Europe
STEVE ELSWORTH *Pluto* £3.95
Seeing Green
JONATHON PORRITT *Blackwell* £15 & £3.95
Revolution in the Affluent Society
ERIK DAMMANN *Heretic Books* £4.95

STEVE ELSWORTH draws a satirical picture of statisticians, surveying woodland damaged by acid rain, who 'go round with their notebooks, counting the numbers of dead trees. "You get £20-worth of wood from this tree, and there are about a million trees in this forest, so this investment is worth, let me see, £20 million." End of calculation.'

'But there's a Tree, of many, one' wrote Wordsworth. 'A single Field which I have looked upon, Both of them speak of something that is gone.' What is 'gone', in the cost-benefit analysis parodied by Elsworth, is the notion that trees might have a value not measurable in cash. Assign forests a purely money price and it can be shown they're not worth saving. People may insist, as the West Germans are now doing, that we can afford new smoke-cleaning technologies to keep acid-forming sulphur dioxide out of the air. But sulphur dioxide, just one toxic industrial by-product (nuclear electricity gives us radioactive waste instead), is also just one marker of prosperity: emissions, which have fallen during the recession in the UK, are set to rise again if growth picks up. This suggests an underlying correlation between the health of our expansive economy and the progressive sickness of our natural environment. Environmental campaigning begins with urgently needed technical solutions to particular problems: Elsworth demonstrates the gravity of the acid rain syndrome, the availability of proven remedies and the hypocrisy of the delaying tactics used by the British government and the CEGB. It is unlikely, however, that an array of 'technical

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fixes' can answer the overall challenge: environmentalists must see their concerns in a wider perspective. The price for saving the Black Forest — and the Baden-Wurttemburg Forestry Minister warns that most of its fir and spruce could die by the 1990s — might eventually be, not so many £s per tree, but the halting of industrial expansion and the turn to a stable, sustainable economy.

Acid Rain, a valuable summary of relevant research, does not discuss these larger questions. They have been taken up, recently, by several continental writers, notably André Gorz and Rudolf Bahro; now, with **Seeing Green**, we have a book from a British green activist.

Jonathon Porritt sets out to present the political import of green ideas. His (rather sporadic) polemic against conventional wisdom makes the essential point that no major British political party has begun to gauge the depth of the ecology crisis. His book, like Erik Dammann's, will also correct the still widespread idea that green politics is only, or mainly, about nature conservation. If anything, he skates too lightly from one question to the next — from defence to animal rights, from nuclear power to health and medicine, from education to world poverty. His answers reflect the positions of the Ecology Party (of whose Political Committee he has been co-chairperson) and of the European greens generally: they are interesting, sensible and often more convincing than those current on the Left.

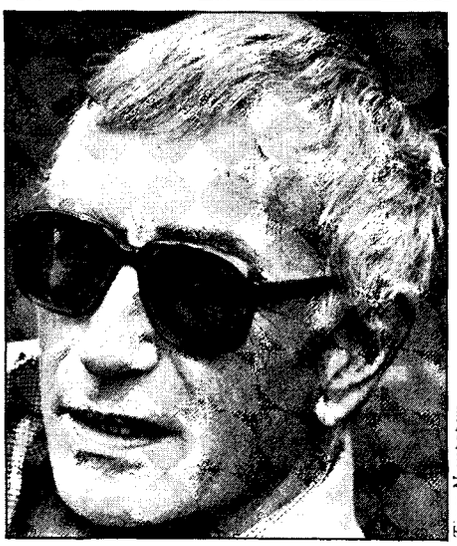
However, his consistent utopian values (libertarian, egalitarian, anti-consumerist, anti-materialist) do not provide a firm critical perspective. No analytic network holds in a single mesh the multitude of issues after which he darts: one swims into view, then the next, as if at random. Current policies are condemned ('the record of the government is an international disgrace', 'the apparent rationality of our decision-making has completely broken down'), but there's no sustained engagement with the underlying causes, the structures of wealth, privilege and power which must be overturned if the evident good sense of eco-politics is to help shape a better future.

Porritt — like many American political ecologists — under-estimates the reach and power of economic forces. This is made clear by a comparison of *Seeing Green* (whose importance, and whose merits, I do not want to underplay) with Erik Dammann's very interesting essay on **Revolution in the Affluent Society**. Dammann's discussion gains enormously from the substantial and historically informed economic analysis with which he begins. The political imperatives which he goes on to specify are framed, then, in a proper awareness of the contradictions which attend any value-based movement for change within our class-divided and competitive society. His emphases are those of the green movement, which has come into prominence in the five years since his book's original Norwegian publication but which shares the concerns animating the Scandinavian 'Future in Our Hands' movement which he helped to found. Despite a simplistic antithesis between virtuous populace and manipulative technical-political élites, Dammann writes interestingly about the appropriate political character of a movement based in individual commitment rather than in a class-derived analysis or ideology; and his shrewdness, here, should pre-empt any facile Marxist criticism. Above all — and Jonathon Porritt is similarly eloquent — he states clearly the priorities of an authentically radical politics for today's rich nations: to abandon the pursuit of indiscriminate (and destructive) 'economic growth', to adopt instead an egalitarian domestic social programme and then to work for a restitution to the poorest countries of the wealth we currently expropriate from them — and expropriate all the faster, as Nyerere has insisted, when our capitalist industrial system is prospering and expanding. □

Of all his exploring

Olivia Harris

In Search of a Past: The Manor House, Amnersfield 1933-1945
RONALD FRASER *Verso* £15 & £3.95



Times Newspapers

Ronald Fraser: a new kind of autobiography

IT IS A brave (some would say foolhardy) gesture to claim such direct descent from Proust as does the title of this book; Fraser's 'search' is as slim as Proust's *recherche* is monumental, but the allusion is nonetheless not outrageous. The joint subjects of Fraser's book are the self and the class system in which the author was brought up. One is left at the end feeling that the deceptive slightness of his account, the restraint, the unadorned prose, the elusive mood, is as appropriate a vehicle for what he recounts as is the piling of image upon image necessary for the relentless intensity of a Proust. The book seems evasive, or rather a better formulation is that it is an investigation of its own evasiveness. A brave — and painful — project.

Ronald Fraser is best known as an oral historian and the initial impulse for the book came from an extensive set of interviews with the servants of his wealthy pre-war childhood in a Berkshire manor house. The collective portrait that emerges from his skilful rendering is in itself a magnificent ethnography of the obsessional minutiae of class distinction. It is an extraordinary and valuable contribution to the historical understanding of domestic service, whose significance historians have stressed in recent years, not only for a fuller appreciation of the intricacies of family life and domestic organisation, but also for assessing how the patterns of dependency, paternalism, deference were reproduced in other contexts in the wider society.

The people who emerge from these pages are neither cynical observers of ruling-class mores nor the cap-doffing caricature of the faithful retainer, but something much more complex. They are people who dimly perceived the grotesque disparity between their own wages and what it cost to keep a stable of hunters, but saw it as a fact of life; people whose existence was subtly, constantly denied, but who maintained a sense of their own selves by lonely walks in the countryside or by petty acts of revolt, as well as a fascinated involvement in the empty, glamorous lives of those they served. The house parlour-maid relives the theatre of the endless dinner-parties, with the silver, the candles, the glass; the groom is still wistful for the great hunting days of the past; the gardener recalls the sound of the tennis balls and the loud high voices of the women ('You take the working class, you can't hear them talking six foot away, but the gentry talks so you can hear them a mile off'). The respect, the obedience is ingrained: 'you mustn't look at them as they went by in the car'; 'the nannies would have thought it disloyal to talk about their employers'.

The various servants have each their own vision of that shared past. The evident happiness of one is underscored by the ironic hindsight of another, the memories of resentment and jealousies of other servants are mingled with genuine affection. The lurking ambiguities seem similar to those that a grown child harbours towards its parents: questions that can never be definitively answered. Were we not happier than you the silent little rich boy? Were your parents mean? Were the differences to be explained because your mother was a foreigner and didn't understand our ways? Your father was a proper gentleman, but rode his horse in a disturbingly brutal way; your mother was so nice, so beautiful, and yet there was a remoteness, a distance.

And then the war, and the speed — magical to the child — with which the encrusted hierarchies were dissolved and the rules bent or abandoned. The lady of the manor learnt to ride a bicycle and milk the cows. Even so, the austerities decreed from Whitehall were adapted to local reality, so that she would change her dungarees for a long dress and sweep down to her solitary luxurious dinners while the servants waited in their uniforms. The way in which that life was lived is sketched lightly but vividly and is all the more evocative for its lack of rhetoric. The child was the young master, born to rule, but he found no friendship with his peers, only with the servants and their children. He confronts the impossibility of ever

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growing up to be like his father, the terror of the apparent inevitability of the army. His response as an adult is to flee England, and to write.

It is one of the book's distinctive qualities that one does not enjoy the easy comfort of watching someone else's soap opera. You the reader must get up from your chair and pace up and down with the narrator. For at the centre of it is Fraser's recognition that he could not mine all those memories of other people from a position of neutrality. 'How can one write about the past without an "I" as the focus?' he asks. His answer is the book itself, a prismatic decentred autobiography which circles round and round the dilemma of the past, posing it first from outside, as a product of historical class experience, but then also from the more vulnerable perspective of his own psychic life.

To achieve this he subjects his own memories to the same clinical yet sympathetic scrutiny that he uses for the servants' testimonies, by documenting his experience of a four-year psychoanalytic treatment. The dialogue with the analyst is used as a narrative device, a historian's tool, but is also much more. You share with him the discomfort of the experience, its intensity and inconclusiveness; retrace with him the bitterness at his parents' stated preference for horses or dogs over their two sons; negotiate with him the divided loyalty between the remote, beautiful mother and the all-powerful, unbending nanny.

The book operates on many levels: the memories of the servants, the author and his brother; the mechanics and the contexts in which such memories are retraced; the process of writing itself, simultaneously a means to seek out the past and a hope to lay it to rest. As such it constitutes a unique document for assessing the relative claims and strengths of these two approaches to the study of the past — history and psychoanalysis, the social versus the subjective — which are generally assumed to be incompatible and even radically opposed. It is a tribute to his skills as a writer that so many perspectives are brought into play in a way that is haunting, disturbing, but also compelling.

There is a further thread that runs through the book, that of a car journey with his nearly senile father on his way to relive the emptiness of his life in an old people's home and then to die. This is the man who hovered as a threatening force on the edge of that pampered yet deprived childhood. The futility of anger is evoked by his pathetic meanness, the need to comfort his desolation. He stands both for the impossibility of reconciliation and for the need to forgive. The son's rejection of all that he embodies is tempered by acknowledgement of the relationship that binds them.

The book is desperately personal yet at the same time detached. The writer remains an outsider, even to himself. Paradoxically, yet all too believably, he seems even to be an eavesdropper on his own psychoanalysis. There is no resolution (perhaps there cannot be) of the search for integration, for an authentic voice. The book mirrors the fragmentary quality of memory and feeling but is also grounded in spare, repetitive images that conjure up a real childhood. Whether the experience was unique, or typical of a class, or typical of a culture, no mere autobiography will ever seem the same again. □

FICTION

States of desire

Harriett Gilbert

The Foreigner
DAVID PLANTE *Chatto* £9.95
Machine Dreams
JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS *Faber* £8.95
We Don't Live Here Anymore
ANDRE DUBUS *Picador* £7.95 & £2.95
Bad Girls
MARY FLANAGAN *Cape* £8.95

A QUOTE from Hemingway opens the book — 'In Spain you could not tell about anything' — but David Plante's **The Foreigner** is still more flavoured by Henry James than Ernesto. Its sentences may be short and sharp, its paragraphs know when to stop, but its hero-narrator would have made the bullfighter spit. A 19-year-old American on a year's 'study program' in Europe, he handles machismo as though it were a stranger's jockstrap: when it falls into his lap in the shape of Vincent, a crazy, criminal, US ex-pat. who 'came to look' at the Spanish Civil War and never turned back to the States, he can only stare at it with fascinated horror — a condition which shifts, as the novel progesses, to horrified fascination.

The year is 1959. Our hero, too young to remember either the Spanish or the Second World War, has come to Europe (Paris/Barcelona) partly on that account: 'It was as if Europe had gone beyond everything I could fear, or imagine'. A descendant of French Canadians, he's also attracted to his roots; but his greatest desire, perversely, is *not* to belong. The jacket blurb informs us that he finally does. 'He becomes,' it says, 'a native of a land to which he is bound for the rest of his life.' But the author is more enigmatic.

Having crossed the Atlantic by steamer (during which crossing he first meets Angela: black, mysterious and, it transpires, Vincent's lover and partner in crime), our hero sets out on whatever the passive form of a 'rampage' might be. He smuggles something (he doesn't ask what) through French customs; he agrees to deliver a sealed letter to Spain; he participates in an abortive robbery (or is it? again, he doesn't ask) — all without personal commitment. The consummation of his sexual arousal by Angela/Vincent/Angela-and-Vincent is achieved with the same kind of chilling, obsessive uninvolvement. It's a strange, uneven, unsettling book: initially, a superb account of late adolescent dislocation; progressively, something more disquieting and ruthless. If, besides the Hemingway and James, there's a strong tang of Paul Bowles's thrillers, Plante has added an astringent impassivity of his own.

In Jayne Anne Phillips's first novel, **Machine Dreams**, the male characters leave the States (specifically, small-town Virginia) for simpler, more obvious reasons: World War 11 and the Philippines for Mitch; Vietnam for Billy, Mitch's son. The women, even Billy's liberal, dope-smoking, hippy sister Danner, stay determinedly at home: canning vegetables, sewing, studying, teaching the next generation to read, ensuring that their country and households tick over whatever the wartime absences, or peacetime financial vicissitudes of the menfolk.

This is a graceful, honest-feeling, restrained and deliberately low-key novel: a family saga, in some respects, as it pans generations of Danner-Hampsons, yet one which lingers too lovingly on individual members of that family for abstract concepts such as 'dynasty' to lumber into the frame. For the same reason, the book is unable to provide us with quite the panorama of 20th-century US history that it often implies it would like to: Gracie, Bess, Jean and the rest are too particular for that.

There are some startling, tangential, suggestive images: the Chinese leper compelled to live in an isolated tent by the river; the moment when Billy drags big sister Danner to lie in the path of a taxying plane. There's also the constant hum of a more specific political anger: that of 'small people' being abused by their government. But the novel's main tension is domestic: a delicate counterbalance of love, aspiration and loneliness. Less exciting than Phillips's earlier stories, but no less skilled.

Andre Dubus also writes about small-town lives and loves, but his are relentless wars of attrition (usually between spouses) conducted with fists, with a gun, with words, with whatever's lying around. **We Don't Live Here Anymore** is very much from the school that *Granta* christened Dirty Realism. Its deft, economical, concentrated prose exposes an introverted USA of six-packs, all-day television, fishing-and-shooting trips for the men, bourbon numbness for the women. But it's also after something different. Almost alone among books by men, from *any* literary school, it's questioning what being 'male' really means.

In the first story, 'The Pretty Girl', there's an obvious distance between the author and flailing, iron-pumping, wife-raping Ray, who can't understand why his pretty little Polly has left him and won't come back. In the three linked novellas that follow, however, the men's attempts to make some sense of manhood, marriage, parenthood, love, women's and their own sexuality, have the engrossing complexity of something very immediate. Structurally, there are long, looping flashbacks that dissipate the stories' momentum, while the final novella ties up its ends in a disappointingly cosy little bow. None of this should distract from the book's honest strengths.

If only the people in Mary Flanagan's **Bad Girls** weren't all so self-consciously eccentric. If only they didn't all swoop into French at the drop of the smallest *chapeau*. If only they weren't all so brilliant. If only they weren't all so *rich*. The children, it has to be said, are exceptions: Rupert, endlessly patient (to a point) when kidnapped by his godmother lumpy Louise; gentle Killer, with her runkled socks, always forced to play the Crazy Doctor, Evil Elvira or the Body Snatcher... It wouldn't be fair to say that they save the collection — it is, at all times, studded with moments of fierce and genuinely painful humour — but they do help the balance in a tightrope walk between style and mere affectation. □

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Shorter reviews

The Spirit of Solidarity

FATHER JOZEF TISCHNER
Harper & Row £5.95

Events of the last few weeks in Poland have shown just how precarious a priest's life can be, if you happen (as many do) to speak out against the Jaruzelski regime. The disgraceful fate of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, and the certainty that many Poles have that the real criminals involved in his case will never stand trial, are appalling reminders that violence and injustice still poison the atmosphere in 'normalised' Poland. This book by Solidarity's leading philosopher deserves to be read not only by Solidarity supporters, but by anyone who still finds Solidarity's Catholic connections distasteful.

Originally published in Polish two years ago, Father Tischner's short book is a collection of interlocking essays, each one a stepping-stone towards a coherent and concise picture of the philosophical convictions at the heart of Solidarity. In passing he indicates why the tanks and uniforms have not the slightest hope of successfully displacing Solidarity's ideals in the hearts and minds of ordinary Poles. Written in a deceptively simple style, with a deft ability to translate complex notions into plain terms without being patronising, Father Tischner's book could fit into university courses not only of political thought, but philosophy too.

Although by a Catholic theologian it's far from a conventional Catholic tract. Father Tischner reflects on the meanings of such terms as work, revolution, exploitation, betrayal, democracy and many other related notions, and fits them into a Polish context. But his sophisticated reflections speak to an audience much wider than Poland. For one thing, Father Tischner inadvertently answers one major question that has troubled the Left in this country: why are Polish workers so attracted to Catholicism? The sensible answer is given in this book — because the only genuine socialism to be found in Poland today (despite reactionary teachings in some areas), is spoken from the pulpits by modest, courageous priests like Tischner and Popieluszko. Ordinary Poles respect the Church because it respects them.

Father Tischner reminds us not only what hopes there once were, but he also gives hopes for the future. And not in some mealy-mouthed vaguely pious fashion, but in the simple, direct and vigorous language. The contrast between his writing and the average party speech says it all.

Gary Mead

The Defence Diaries of W. Morgan Petty

'edited by' BRIAN BETHELL *Viking* £6.95

It seems to me safe to bet everyone who reads this will say the same thing about it. 'This is a Henry Root as undertaken by a sort of elderly Adrian Mole.' That's what it is: Root and Mole, with Petty, a faded gent from Kent, taking the part of Britain's best-selling teenager. Bethell provides him with a twittish Tonto, or perhaps Man Most Days of the Week, in the vague shape of Roger the gardener.

Mr Petty and Roger set up a nuclear free zone in 3, Cherry Drive, Canterbury. Bethell offers us Petty's diary, interspersed with 50 replies from those in what passes for the real world, all of them recipients of letters relating to the Petty defences against fallout. These are presented in facsimile.

I suspect Brian Bethell hoped for better, but his correspondents play ball as often as not. Twenty-nine of the respondents, from Blunkett and Carver to Saatchi and Sinden, amuse themselves by twitting Bethell/Petty. Number 30 is BUPA, which also composes a return gag, but one that's insufficiently funny. Of the other 20, six are *pro forma*, two are nondescript, one — David Crouch M.P. — is nervous. This leaves 11 cases of interest, including two from Winston Churchill, who admires Mr Petty's *'redoubtable "bulldog" spirit'*. Most of the others simply send off leaflets.

But even here, one suspects that few have fallen into Bethell's baited trap. His epigraph — actually, for me, the most aptly selected aspect of the book — applies Wellington's words *They may not frighten the enemy, but By God they frighten me* to the nuclear proponents. The bumf Petty/Bethell gets is just too predictable to be frightening.

'Defence,' says Petty on his penultimate page, 'is far too serious a subject to joke about.' Get out of that, dear reader, implies Bethell. Of course it is/isn't, replies the reader. The trouble with these spoof diaries is that there are better jokes, and plenty of them, about W.I.-type activities than about nuclear war. I'm afraid Bethell doesn't so much fall between two stools as kick the pair of them over.

Bill Greenwell

Thomas Hardy's England

JOHN FOWLES & JO DRAPER *Cape* £9.95

Hardy has been recruited to preside over a coffee-table book of old Dorset photographs assembled for the nostalgia market. In some ways he's the right man for the job. The rural world he was born into was vanishing even as he worked to recall and preserve it. His success as Victorian author, Fowles points out in his fine introductory essay, forced Hardy to deny the past he was emotionally dependent on. Although publicly he welcomed the Great Change his work reveals grave private doubts about it and he would be pleased to know his novels are regarded as valuable sources of local history.

The beautifully reproduced pictures in *Thomas Hardy's England* are of more documentary than artistic interest: snapshots of people and places, postcards from the past. The eye is frequently distracted from Jo Draper's informative text to answer the quizzical gaze of a cobbler, hurdle-maker, shepherd or milkmaid. Not, however, for olde-worde charm but because they look so familiar, dressed for the part, just like today's shop-assistants in supermarket delicatessens with frilly caps on; an odd merging of myths. Some of the photographs do escape the ephemeral. One, for instance, by Hardy's friend Hermann Lea whose work forms the bulk of this collection, of four children outside a Puddletown shop around 1890, seems a piece of the world rather than just an image of it. While modern agribusiness destroys hedgerows and butterflies *Thomas Hardy's England* offers a kind of compensation for the losses exacted by progress, losses which, in the words of Thoreau, 'are never quite made up to us'.

Alan Hurst

The Hardest Work under Heaven: the Life and Death of the British Coal Miner

MICHAEL POLLARD *Hutchinson* £9.95

'Chained, belted, harnessed, like dogs in a go-cart — black, saturated with wet, and more than half-naked — crawling upon their hands and feet and dragging their heavy loads behind them,' wrote a mines inspector in 1841 of female workers in a British pit, 'they present an appearance indescribably disgusting and unnatural.' Michael Pollard uses this and many other apposite quotations to demonstrate overwhelmingly the degrading impact of the mining industry.

Times have changed. In 1913 a single British miner produced 233 tons of coal a year. In 1980-81 this had risen to 562 tons; yet for every hundred men working in the pits in 1913, there were by 1981 only 18. Pollard comments that 'In 200 years miners had moved from sheer backbreaking physical toil in conditions of near (and in Scotland, actual) slavery to the status of technicians and engineers.' The changes, he adds, were dictated not by humanitarianism, legislation or even unionism, but by economics.

His story is not new, but he tells it well. His comments are often sharp. Chapter 7 on the unions charts what he dubs 'the miners' place in the demonology of middle Britain', a demonology still at work in what many who ought to know better say of Arthur Scargill. He details the scandalous prejudice of the courts against the workers, noting that 'You could, in 1909, if you were a member of the employing classes, push your luck to the limit and get away with it. If you were one of the employed, and tried to push your luck even half as far, you could end up doing hard labour.'

The book is entertaining about 'the monumental drinking capacity of the British miner' and about his leisure pursuits: dog-fighting, cock-fighting and prize-fighting among them. But Michael Pollard never forgets the price of coal. Chapter 5 is called 'Five Pence a Life', and his last chapter is an account of the Gresford Disaster of 1934 when, as a result of management slackness, 265 miners died. Fines on the managers totalled £140. The price of a miner's life had gone up to just over ten shillings.

James Bentley

THE BRITISH SPY NOVEL

by John Atkins is the first serious study of a popular literary form from Childers and Buchan to le Carré and Deighton (£14.95). Atkins' *J.B. Priestley* is an affectionate, comprehensive study of the life and work of JBP, now in paper (£5.95). His Sex in Literature Vol. 4 covers the 17th & 18th centuries, the high noon of erotic writing, with long passages quoted and many illustrations (Paper £6.95). Three important Becketts are the *Collected Shorter Prose 1945-1980* (£9.95), *Collected Poems 1930-1978* (£8.95) and *Disjecta* (collected criticism & miscellanea) (£8.95). Three unusual fictions from Elspeth Davie, one of our finest novelists who examines the power of our possessions to dominate our lives are *Providings*, *The Spark* (short stories) & *Creating a Scene* (each £4.95).

CALDER WRITERS TOUR EAST ANGLIA

Ten of our writers have been invited by Eastern Arts to tour their area. From France come Alain Robbe-Grillet, Eugène Ionesco, Claude Simon and Yves Navarre, from America William Burroughs, and the five British are novelists Trevor Hoyle and Alan Burns, playwrights Howard Barker and Snoo Wilson and radical musicologist Christopher Small. Their books will be on sale and *they will appear* at Wells (Norfolk) (Nov 22), Cambridge (Nov 23), Norwich (Nov 24), Bedford (Nov 26), Ipswich (Nov 27), Colchester (Nov 28). LATEST PUBLICATIONS: Trevor Hoyle's *Vail*, comic but frightening is set in a future Britain of unemployment and disease, where only the rich South East thrives through isolating itself, and terrorism is everywhere (£4.95). Nathalie Sarraute's *Childhood* beautifully captures the essence of her own youth as a poetic novel. (£5.95).

JOHN CALDER * 18 Brewer Street * London W1R 4AS

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FILMS

Conversation piece

John Coleman

Fabrice Luchini's Octave tête-à-tête with Pascale Ogier's Louise

Full Moon In Paris (15)
Camden Plaza; Chelsea Cinema
Red Dawn (15)
Leicester Square Theatre; Classic, Chelsea; Odeons, Kensington and Swiss Cottage
Hamsin (15)
Phoenix

WE ARE ALL mortal but there seems something peculiarly sad and wasteful about the death of Pascale Ogier of a heart attack a couple of weeks ago. She was 24 and had recently won the award for best actress at the Venice Film Festival. Watching her simply *be* the wayward, arresting Louise in **Full Moon in Paris** (she fairly holds the occasion together), one can see why. The cinema's mystery, of course, is that she is still there, in an eternal present. She plays an interior designer and in fact contributed largely to the film's more intimate sets and overall appearance. This is the fourth in the 'Comedies and Proverbs' series written and directed by Eric Rohmer, taking as its tag an old couplet from the Champagne region: 'A man with two women loses his soul, a man with two homes loses his mind.' Rohmer, ever — in the most sympathetic sense — a woman's man, chooses to switch the genders.

For it is Ogier's ethereal, volatile yet practical Louise whose resolute irresolution provides the talking-point for the occasion — a Rohmer film without an unusual quantity of dialogue is a rare event. Living with dour, athletic Rémi (Tcheky Karyo) in his suburban apartment at Marne-la-Vallée, she busily sets about decorating a flat she has hitherto been leasing out in Paris, resolved to spend certain nights of the week there, alone. Rémi hates parties (one splendid scene shows him standing like some grim rock while everyone chatters and dances): Louise adores them. She has an escort and platonic pal in married Octave (Fabrice Luchini), who deplores her taste in blokes, with some justice, and sometimes sulks that she fails to recognise *his* sexual appeal. 'People who give up seduction are dead,' he proposes. To which she responds, 'I've never had a purely physical relationship.' This Louise is capricious and self-deceiving, but there is no doubting her genuine, balancing need for periods of solitude.

She fears being tied down. 'When someone loves me too much, I love them less.' And yet there is supreme comedy when she does find herself marooned one evening in that Paris *pied-à-terre*, phoning around with false casualness to discover no one available: next day, making the best of it, she positively boasts of how she settled down with a couple of books (one looks like an Astérix) and had a wonderful time. That flat expresses her, with its Mondrian-style painting an odd companion to the white Greek column beside her bed. Rémi, at first furious at her shuttling to and fro, kisses and makes up: 'You're a real mystery.' Which, of course, she is, like most of us: only more beguilingly so. Her worldly-wise best woman friend Camille (Virginie Thévenet) wonders what would happen if Rémi fell in love with someone else. Louise has no qualms: 'If he stops loving me, I'll stop loving him.' An irony begins here that carries through to a bitter enough, or biter bit, ending.

Octave, scribbling down his *bon mots* in a café while Louise goes to the loo, spots a familiar female face. Louise has spotted an even more familiar male one, that of Rémi making a phone call: she ducks back. The woman was wearing a fur toque, like one owned by Camille. Time passes (the action covers four winter months) and Louise dances sexily with a pretty appalling-looking tall type at a party. Next night, that full moon rides high in the sky and, in a brilliant montage sequence, she goes on the town with this Bastien (Christian Vadim), ending up in her bed with him. Leaving him asleep, she steals away to catch a train to the suburbs; with time to kill, she has an eccentric, almost confessional conversation with a stranger sketching for a children's book at a café table. Then she catches her train and the rest must be silence. Rohmer makes very handsome talkies, depending a lot on the human conditional tense: this is a fine one.

John Milius's **Red Dawn**, scripted by the director and Kevin Reynolds, tells a preposterous tale of Russians, Cubans and Nicaraguans parachuting down outside Calumet High School, Colorado, shooting the black teacher who has just been talking of Genghis Khan and rapidly taking over the township. Tanks roll, a concentration camp is set up, firing squads crackle and a bunch of pupils escapes to the mountains, from which they learn to make explosive sorties on the rotten Reds. My favourite lines in this extreme Right-wing lunacy belong to Colonel Ben Johnson -- good ol' boy — explaining that Europe decided to sit this one out. 'All except England.' Wait for it. 'They didn't last very long.'

Back to some semblance of harsh reality with Daniel Wachsmann's **Hamsin**, an honest attempt to mirror an Israeli's fears about 'growing violence, the tendency to see Arab citizens as second-class'. Galilee, 1982, and a Jewish farmer's efforts to purchase Arab land (otherwise to be taken over by the government) so that he may lease it back to them. His motives are viewed with growing suspicion by both peoples. Some striking imagery includes an old Arab's courtyard strewn with the corpses of his prize pigeons, the well-meaning farmer's taurine revenge on a trusted Arab worker who has dared to sleep with his sister. Certainly the piece leans into melodrama but it has been made with gallantry under often difficult conditions. And the issues it raises are desperately serious. □

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ROCK

Epic affirmation

Barney Hoskyns

WITH ALL the hype of chart pop proving more contagious than ever, what chance does the passionate old dream of rock now stand? If Jon Savage is right that what is being celebrated in most successful pop today is, simply, success itself, then what chance commitment?

October tends to be the pop industry's test period, the month which sees most major releases and a flood of tours to promote them. Thus albums by Bowie, Culture Club, Frankie and Wham! are upon us, as are the latest by centurions of committed passion rock like U2 and Big Country, bands which stand staunchly by the classical traditions of live performance and emotional intoxication. What is the state of this 'rock'? Is there any point in taking it seriously, or is it as shallow and hypocritical as a Duran Duran video?

U2 on **The Unforgettable Fire** (Island) and Big Country on **Steeltown** (Mercury) attempt in different ways to vindicate their commitment. Both are in a sense offspring of the fallout after punk, when melody won out over anarchy and new and powerful atmospherics were variously born in groups like Magazine and Joy Division. While the vacuum left by punk was initially filled with baleful industrial gloom, a certain positivism emerged through The Skids (Big Country leader Stuart Adamson's eccentric former group) and, later, U2.

U2 were the fresher force, blown in from Ireland and free of punk entanglements. A couple of them happened also to be Christians, something that has always counted against them, more in the form of an unspoken critical subtext than of outright contempt for religion. Still, what was fresh in, say, 'I Will Follow' was precisely the sense of invocation, the surging guitar joy that made it sound like a happy version of Joy Division's darkly obsessive 'Transmission'.

Five albums on and U2 are a major rock band, in the American stadium league. People still protest that popular music must be more than this, this epic affirmation, but U2 shine on regardless. The charge that they and others have benefited from punk's flushing-out and then returned straightway to the bombast of the Seventies does not bother them. 'Why can people not just see our music as part of something else,' they wonder, rather than simply in the context of rock's endless cycles?

The only answer is that thousands do. Where other great dry-ice rockists like Simple Minds and Echo & the Bunnymen are still connected to the hip in-world of pop gossip and street theorising, U2 have broken through to a true mass audience which is not crusading against synthetic pop but simply is not very interested in it: the squares.

Part of the reason for this must be the implicit knowledge that singer Bono and guitarist The Edge are a pair of absolute charmers. We know this because they don't look like rock stars (the other two do). At Brixton's Academy on Saturday night, they looked no more like self-important rock stars than when I saw them four years ago. Nor were they remotely bombastic — the difference between U2 and Simple Minds is that U2's progressive rock is bursting with funky details like The Edge's machine-gun guitar scratches and Adam Clayton's deep, pulsing bass, rather than propped up by a bank of synthetic sludge.

U2 have over-perfected the art of climaxing, it's true, and at times on Saturday the soaring atmospherics sounded like so much blanket noise, but for the most part it's a clean and dynamic combustion. I cannot say I lost myself in the headiness of it all, but nor can I argue with the power of songs like 'Pride' and 'New Year's Day' to *beseech* and *invigorate*.

The detractions will go on as long as people imagine that rock's function is to be a transparent vehicle of social (rather than mood) change. Dave Marsh in a recent *Village Voice* laments U2's 'refusal to face ugly facts', as though any committed populist music must take into account all that is wrong with this world. He also gives peculiar vent to the latent frustration with their religious beliefs when he remarks that 'much as I admire their devotion to the cause of peace, I mistrust the roots of that devotion, which are clearly expressed here as a matter of mystical eschatology, a longing for a benign ending to this life, but an ending no less complete than holocaust'. I see very little evidence for this 'clear expression', but the charge betrays a curious intolerance.

Under such fire, of course, U2 can only point to their 'spirit' — and if we don't feel it, that is our loss.

Big Country's spirit is less convincing. Their second album *Steeltown* is culpable of all that is most bludgeoning and sentimental about second-generation bombast rock. The impression is that Stuart Adamson has found a very useful refrain from a Scottish battle march and overworked it to death. The fact that he writes about the injustices of Corby and 'The Great Divide' between unions and management is, sadly, not enough to prevent his sound, in the hands of U2's old producer Steve Lillywhite, from overreaching itself.

Earlier songs like 'Chance' — more modestly Springsteenite — or 'The Storm' — more honestly drawn on an ancient ballad heritage — were underplayed enough for the screaming bagpipe guitars to sound plausible, but the sonic reinforcement behind 'Rain Dance' and 'Flame Of The West' here pummels everything into the repeated clenchings of a fist.

It's when one reads Adamson in the music press announcing that 'there's only four rock bands left in the world — us, U2, Simple Minds, and the Bunnymen' (now the standard four) that the mass movement of fist-punching 'terrace-rock' starts to look a bit sterile. And thus one considers other options like The Fall's brashly snarling **Wonderful & Frightening World Of The Fall** (Beggar's Banquet) or Foetus's maddened Zappa-esque assault on all of contemporary noise, **Hole** (Some Bizzare). Or come to that: C.L. Blast's magnificently old-fashioned soul sermon **C.L. Blast** (Park Place, import), more crisp bluegrass from Ricky Skaggs on **Country Boy** (Epic), and the 'definitive' double-album collection of **Soweto Street Music** (Audiotrax). Plus a whole lot more, if I had the space to tell you about it. □

Anton Corbijn

'U2 shine on regardless'

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MUSIC

Exceptional

Andrew Clements

Birtwistle 50th Birthday Concert
Queen Elizabeth Hall
Harrison Birtwistle
MICHAEL HALL *Robson* £8.95

HARRISON BIRTWISTLE's position in British music grows ever more singular and secure. He is widely respected, generously performed; yet his music still carries with it an air of mystery, an unwillingness to betray its origins or its precise intentions. Most composers of his eminence would find their work the subject of numerous theses and analytical articles and faithfully imitated by tyros; with Birtwistle that simply has not happened. To a large extent he remains unanalysable without access to his working notebooks and sketches, and his style is so identifiable that anyone borrowing elements of it would instantly be branded as derivative.

So, Birtwistle continues along a solitary path, a path through territory that remains wreathed in obscurity and some of whose major landmarks will remain unknown while two of his major projects of the past decade go unperformed: the gigantic opera *The Mask of Orpheus*, now scheduled for English National Opera in the spring of 1986, and the 'mechanical pastoral' *Yan, Tan Tethera*, originally commissioned by the BBC for simultaneous radio and television transmission but now abandoned by the Corporation and still in search of a stage production.

Yet the sequence of smaller-scale works continues and the programme assembled by the London Sinfonietta to celebrate Birtwistle's 50th birthday in the Elizabeth Hall contained two new pieces, one of them, *Secret Theatre*, by any standards a major addition to his work list. Though some three months after the event, the Sinfonietta's concert was in every respect a splendid birthday celebration. Alongside the premières it included two earlier Birtwistle scores commissioned by the orchestra, the cartoon-like *Carmen Arcadiae Mechanicae Perpetuum* and the uncompromising *Verses for Ensembles*, both in quite superlative performances conducted by David Atherton that were more vivid and pungent than I've ever heard before.

Secret Theatre too contained things one has not heard before in Birtwistle's music — or, at least, not combined in such a potent way. Essentially it synthesises two aspects of his style which previously have remained independent. The interlocking clockwork mechanisms that are the *raison d'être* of a piece like *Carmen Arcadiae* have now been superimposed upon the kind of melodic development familiar in his works of the early 1970s. A small group of woodwind instruments (called the Cantus in the score) play the endless melodies, periodically recruiting new members from the main orchestra to their cause; the remainder of the band (the Continuum) play the mechanical figures, though they erupt into elaboration and even fully fledged solo lines at times.

In one way it is a new look at the age-old musical concept of tune and accompaniment, but without the accompaniment (the Continuum) having in any sense a subsidiary role. Yet characteristically Birtwistle invests the idea with a fresh, mysterious significance, with instruments exchanging their roles according to some undisclosed, intuitive ritual as suggested by the title, taken from a poem by Robert Graves. The music is richly various, boundlessly energetic: at first hearing the ear is overwhelmed by the complexity of some of the writing and the sheer abandon of the primaeval dance which takes over the Cantus towards the close. Repeated listening yields great dividends and opens up yet more mysteries — how the bassoon appears to act as an intermediary between the two groups though always remaining bound to the Continuum, how the tuned percussion is used to crystallise out the harmonic implications of the Continuum.

The contrast between *Secret Theatre* and the other new work, *Songs by Myself*, could hardly have been more marked — the one a sustained single movement of great power, lasting almost half an hour, the other a tiny set of songs to the composer's own texts. Alongside the mainstream of his music Birtwistle likes to produce sets of miniatures, works drawn in economical outline only. The Songs belong in that genre, but they are no less exquisitely proportioned for that, no less characteristic of the composer's methods of working.

Michael Hall's long awaited study of Birtwistle sheds at least some light on those working methods. With access to some of the composer's archives he has been able to present full analyses of a selection of works and has demonstrated how their composition is a mixture of predetermined technique and deliberately introduced random elements. He discusses in detail works from all periods of the composer's career from the tiny *Verses* for clarinet and piano of 1965 to a section of the magnificent ...*agm*... (1979). The remainder of his output is covered in a general and inevitably less detailed discussion, though there is a lengthy and helpful exegesis on the intricacies of the *Orpheus* opera. To some extent disappointment with certain aspects of the book is a consequence of the publisher's format for this 'Contemporary Composers' series: I would have preferred a more detailed treatment of the structure of Birtwistle's first opera *Punch and Judy*, for instance, and a longer discussion of the ritualistic aspects of the theatre piece *Bow-Down*, one of his greatest achievements. I would also have liked the text to have been written in a more lucid, less self-consciously learned style — some passages read like a catalogue of modern cultural thought. Birtwistle is pre-eminently a natural, instinctive musician, though his working methods are highly sophisticated; by embedding a treatment of his work in such an intellectual context, its power to operate upon listeners on an emotional level is seriously underrated. □

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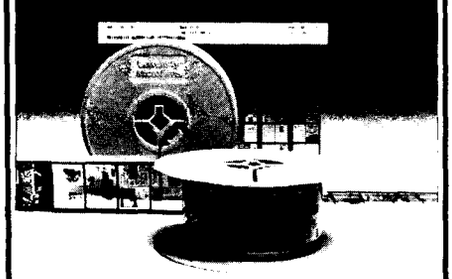

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THEATRE

Fine frenzy

Benedict Nightingale

Bloody Poetry
HOWARD BRENTON *Hampstead*
Rough Crossing
TOM STOPPARD *Lyttelton*

THERE'S A NICE mix of anxiety and exasperation in the punning title of Howard Brenton's latest play. It wouldn't surprise me to learn it had been conceived at four o'clock in the morning, the time when blood sugar is low and sleepers wake to agonise about their uselessness. Are poetry, drama, art itself really anything more than examples of profound self-absorption posing, in particularly deluded periods, as acts of universal benevolence?

By way of asking some such question, **Bloody Poetry** takes us back to 1816 and 1822, over to Switzerland and Italy. Here's Shelley, head of a 'little band of atheistical perverts', proclaiming that giddy, Promethean faith of his. 'When will the world marry itself?' he inquires. 'When will the family be the whole of human society?' And here's the cynical Byron, pausing from the bottle to denounce tyranny. Shelley's pursuit of freedom is, on the face of it, much more high-minded than that of his fellow poet, whose libertarian mission sometimes seems to be to spread the clap as widely through Europe as possible; but its results aren't much better. His abandoned wife kills herself in despair. His child by Mary Godwin, hauled across Italy when sick, droops and dies. So does the little girl Byron fathered on Shelley's mistress Claire Clairemont and perversely insisted, over her mother's wishes, on dispatching to a convent. In spite of what the poets profess, because of what they profess, their personal practice is to 'shred and tear' others; or so Brenton seems to suggest.

Nor are the accusations finished. We're clearly meant to agree with the poets' view of

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Britain, a tiny hell of petty, prurient minds, mean spirits and grotesque injustice — but where are they when those traits reach their apotheosis at Peterloo? Shelley is in Venice with his woman, failing to attend his daughter's deathbed. Byron is probably shinning up a drainpipe to yet another loveless assignation. James Aubrey, I should add, begins the play in a high, hoarse dudgeon of sweat and sottishness and remains that way throughout. Valentine Pelka's Shelley spends it boyishly flashing his eyes and sending his vowels soaring into the flies. Roland Rees's production tends to suggest that the Romantic poets were Romantic poets all the time, without pause for so much as a scratch and a smoke.

Still, the evening is subtler, more balanced and rewarding than it sometimes threatens to become. Though I suspect it won't satisfy those who want their characterisation very deep, or their argument very trenchant, or their history very precise, there's something here for all three parties. And if a recurring image of Romanticism is the monster of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* — 'a very, very silly story', she apologetically grins — it is by no means the only one. Whatever their sins of commission and omission, Brenton makes it quietly clear that Byron and, especially, Shelley *did* lift the eyes, *did* expand the mind, *did* invigorate the heart. At the end one of them is ruminating about revolutionary events in Greece and the other has demonstrated his immortality by emerging from his funeral pyre on that Italian beach to recite his verses about murder and Castlereagh. If those could sing then, and echo now, maybe we shouldn't be too sceptical about the value of bloody poetry.

The other day I remarked that parts of a new play sounded as if they'd been concocted by Tom Stoppard after brain-removal. Having now seen that dramatist's adaptation of Molnar, I feel a bit tactless, as if I'd been cracking sick jokes about disintegrating limbs in a leper ward. Stoppard's mind, that major national asset, does indeed seem to have been filched, lost or mislaid somewhere on the way to the National Theatre. Who would have thought he'd be trading cracks about writer's block being cured by stewed prunes, or wanly cadging our laughter for '*sine qua non*chalance' or '*festine lente* — every Lent a festival'? Incidentally, he should have known that the Latin for 'hurry slowly' is '*festina lente*'. That's the sort of slovenliness for which boys in my adolescent prison were first racked, then flayed, then ritually disembowelled.

I wouldn't wish those punishments on a dramatist who has given us so much educated delight over the years. A substantial reward for the recovery of that missing brain might be a more positive response to a sloppiness that does, I fear, extend from little to large matters.

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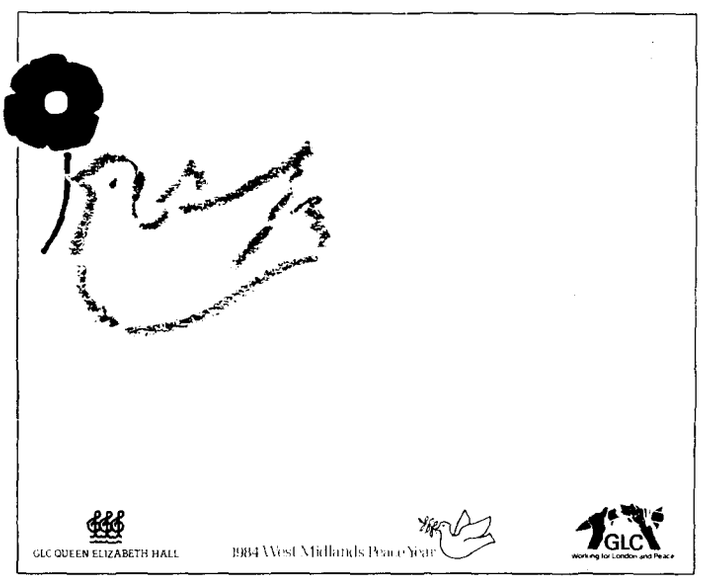

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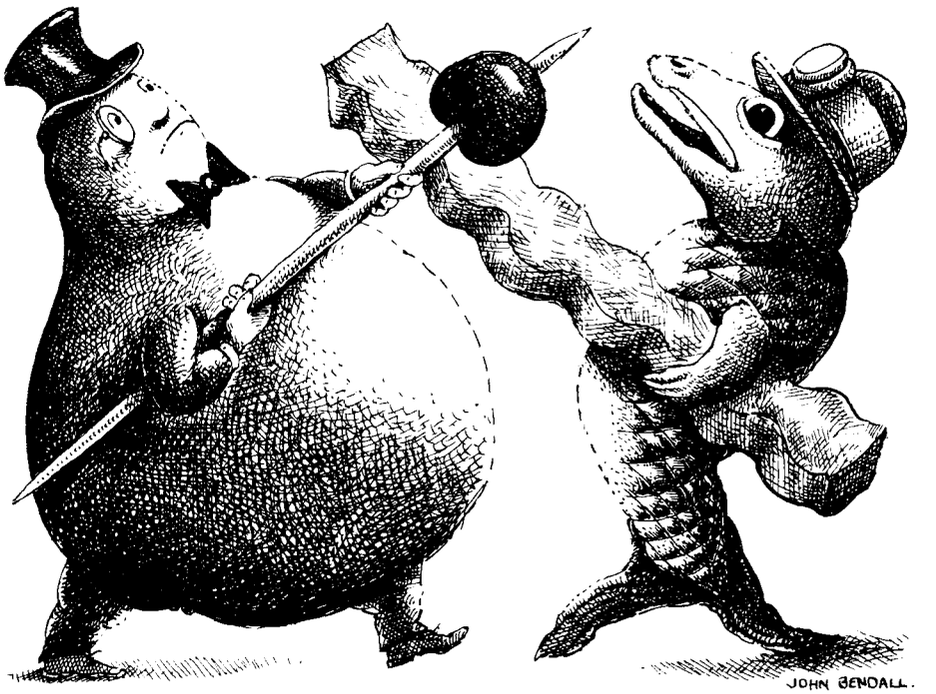
Creative rumpus, imaginative unruliness, has always appealed to Stoppard more than nice, clean plot and, in the case of *Jumpers* and *Travesties*, that was cause only for gratitude. But **Rough Crossing** demands more conventional skills. We must feel it matters that the young composer Adam overhears his actress-fiancée exchanging post-coital reverie with her leading man; matters that this will ruin the musical they're jointly preparing for New York; and therefore matters that the wily playwright Turai should convince the disconsolate tunesmith that the compromising encounter was actually a rehearsal. As it turns out, we feel none of those things. Who would have thought that characterisation, tension, momentum and other such necessary ingredients of the well-made comedy would so elude Tom Stoppard?

It was probably a mistake to transfer the action from Molnar's Italian castle to a transatlantic liner called the *Italian Castle*, thus introducing distracting boat-situations and boat-jokes, and probably also a mistake to transform what's being rehearsed there from a straight comedy to a Broadway musical. That gives Stoppard the excuse to parody the convoluted books of such shows, and André Previn the chance to satirise their scores; and neither does so entertainingly enough to justify the hold-ups their efforts cause the plot. The impression grows that no one involved in *Rough Crossing* trusts poor Molnar. They've sought to build him up — and managed to thin him down.

Peter Wood's production is no help. It seems curiously unsure, whether it's dealing with the principals and their story or with the chorus and its attempts to bop its way through stormy weather. How, for instance, is it that the furniture can be sent sliding by the tilt of the ship and the performers be unaffected, or some performers stagger and lurch and others remain upright? When next the Radio Four announcer issues a gale warning for Biscay, the entire company should be put on a tugboat and taken for a short cruise in those notorious waters. Then they might discover a way of convincing us that the *SS Italian Castle* is somewhere other than beached on the South Bank of the Thames.

Robin Bailey has his moments as a querulous matinée idol, and so does John Standing as the playwright Turai, a sort of courageous Coward, precious but steely, determined the show will go on even if the ship goes under; yet only one performer consistently achieves more than the semblance of substance. That's Michael Kitchen, playing the congenital landlubber oddly charged with fetching the cast its blankets, cocktails and breakfast the morning after. Though he can't prevent us tiring of the running gag in which he himself quaffs whatever drink he's brought Mr Standing, he made me at least laugh with his earnest misinterpretation of terms nautical. In fact, Stoppard gives him an altogether unfair share of a resource in short supply: good lines; and, as the evening proceeds, he relies more and more on his pedantic, well-meaning presence for the fun missing elsewhere. But that, of course, is just another symptom of what's wrong with *Rough Crossing* as a whole. A piece about the troubles inflicted and endured by lovers has become one that seems most importantly to involve a comic steward. □



John Bendall

Let them eat chips

Anne Smith

IN A RECENT letter to *Private Eye* (21 September), Miss Leonora Slade reveals that 'whilst visiting a friend at the Barbican' she 'popped along to the local, vastly expensive delicatessen for a pint of milk' and saw Arthur Scargill at the checkout counter. In the spirit, no doubt, of purely sociological curiosity, she 'peered' into his shopping-basket and '*noticed* [my italics: if you peer you're bound to notice, Miss Slade] he had purchased avocado pears, frozen prawns, strawberries and cream — cost £18ish.'

Equally without a doubt it was humanitarian concern that caused Miss Slade to wonder 'what culinary delights he had in mind for his second course and whether his comrades, the striking miners, are eating quite as well as their union leader.' She adds an arch p.s.: 'I always thought he lived on fish and chips wrapped in the *Morning Star*.'

On reading this, one is first moved to sigh for the day when the *Morning Star*'s circulation will be such as to supply all the chip-shops in the country with next-day wrapping. One then gasps at Mr Scargill's Gargantuan capacity, that he can consume 18 pounds' worth of avocados, etc., at a sitting. One goes on to speculate that the middle course of this banquet was bound to be the tongues of a thousand humming-birds, or NCB board-members, stuffed with caviar and truffles and decorated with peacock feathers by the duped wives of striking miners.

Of course Mr Scargill ought not to eat avocados, prawns and strawberries. Of course he ought to confine himself to black pudding, cod, baked beans, spam and chips. Anything else, comrades, in this hour of crisis, is Napoleonism —

> Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brain-workers. . .It is for *your* sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. (*Animal Farm*)

— or is it?

Another fictional reference comes to mind. Early in Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, John Barton, a Manchester factory-hand, invites old friends, met by chance, home for tea:

> Then came a long whispering, and chinking of money, to which Mr and Mrs Wilson were too polite to attend. . .
>
> 'Run, Mary dear, just round the corner, and get some fresh eggs at Tipping's (you may get one a-piece, that will be fivepence), and see if he has any nice ham cut, that he would let us have a pound of.'
>
> 'Say two pounds, missus, and don't be stingy,' chimed in the husband.

It is in the tradition of the working class to spend your last ha'penny on setting a good table for guests, even unexpected ones.

Perhaps the only virtue Miss Slade's letter has is in its plain demonstration of the food snobbery that runs through British society like a virus. Like all snobberies, it creates in those snobbed against a reversed mirror-image of itself, and, as usual, the practical manifestations of conflicting class-attitudes have become cultural, too deep to be eradicated by reason.

I have recently given up most of my working-class eating habits, convinced by the arguments of the health lobby. The experience has been traumatic. Far, far easier to change to pasta and chapattis, the daily bread, so to speak, of the working classes in other countries, than to wholefoods and a high incidence of fruit and vegetables. For with almost every mouthful I

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consume, I feel I am betraying my roots. A cloud of guilt rises with the steam from the brown rice, casting its long shadow over the pears in red wine. 'Class traitor' seems to be written in letters of fire over the kidneys *flambés*; 'man shall not live by wholegrain bread alone,' my conscience whispers as I pass my comrades queuing for their morning rolls, every step taking me closer to the health food shop and an identity crisis: no longer a victim of society, not yet (never!) a member of the bourgeoisie, who am I?

It's not the simple dilemma it seems to be, either. Emotionally I am perfectly willing to face death by white bread and mushy peas; my life might be shortened anyway by the stress endured in the identity crisis that has resulted from giving them up. But emotionally too, and equally, I am unwilling to satisfy the sordid need of the likes of Miss Slade for the lower orders to play Uncle Tom to their Little Eva, to perform the dietary equivalent of shuffling and singing 'Swanee' for the comfort of my 'betters'.

That is why Mr Scargill's alleged consumption of the avocados and prawns, while his comrades are to be seen on TV every day shovelling down beans on toast, beans and chips, beans with everything, made me so uneasy. With my intellect I defended him; in my heart I accused him. For it is not really enough that under his leadership eventually all miners will be able to afford prawns and strawberries *ad lib* — they already can, in normal circumstances. Nor is it solidarity but cynicism, in my book, that makes labour leaders in public life tuck in to rissoles and chips in pit canteens at lunchtime and go home to a veal casserole in the evening.

If they sincerely cared for the welfare of the working class, they would direct at least the same amount of energy now invested in campaigns for better hours and working conditions, or better funding for the NHS, into campaigns for better eating habits. Life security must be at least as important as job security, surely. Speak for England, Arthur.

Health *versus* politics; the medical commonsense of wholefoods *versus* the ideological soundness of a high carbohydrate diet; scampi and brown rice *versus* pie and chips — the mirror or the lamp — a searing dilemma for the up-and-coming, sprouted from the grass-roots socialist in this last quarter of the 20th century. □

Among this week's contributors:

M. H. RYLE is currently working, with Roland Clarke, on a book about socialism and green politics to be published by Pluto next year.

OLIVIA HARRIS is senior lecturer in anthropology at Goldsmiths' College.

GARY MEAD lived and worked in Poland until last year.

JAMES BENTLEY's books include *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (OUP) and *Between Marx and Christ* (Verso).

ALAN HURST is the author of *Hardy: An Illustrated Dictionary.*

BARNEY HOSKYNS is a staff writer on the *New Musical Express.*

Naseem Khan
Performance

IF YOU'D had a bird's eye view of the Midland Group's building in Nottingham recently, you'd have seen some strange sights. A naked man with a flaming torch and huge (fake) cock abseiling down the side of the building. A shuffling group of blindfolded people being led across a flat roof.

In fact, if your bird had had x-ray vision, as strange sights could have been seen inside the building. For this was the annual showcase of the experimental, the Midland Group's national Performance Art Showcase, five years old and doing well. For four days the centre hosted a variety of events, chosen by Rob La Frenais and Silvia C. Ziranek, to mix the new with the established, to act as both stimulant and waterhole for the diverse world of Performance, called by La Frenais, editor of *Performance Magazine*, 'the queerest trade of all'. At a time when its practitioners worry about the work's future, the showcase was a useful morale booster. It also proved that there was still abundant energy in a body that some had thought likely to expire from abstraction.

There were few signs of flagging at the Midland Group. For a start, the implacable schedule demanded vast stamina and staying power. 'I promise you a pretty gruelling day,' La Frenais announced sombrely to the assembled masses on Saturday morning. Twelve hours and 14 events later, when they stumbled out into the darkened streets, few would have gone back to argue with him. But mixed with the exhaustion was a distinct exhilaration, a result of the rapid turnover of vastly diverse work. Particularly impressive were Roberta M. Graham's film and slide/tape presentations, dealing with lush images of death, violence, sexuality: powerful, disciplined and troubling work. By contrast there was Robert Ayres's mystery tour around the building. Sarah Edge's piece used slides of dignified Victorian female miners to make a point about the miners' strike. Stefan Szczelkun explored the roots of his own development, from the days of drugs and demos, to an acceptance of his own anger. The magnificent Rose English, a Home Counties Ancient Mariner, held her audience captive with her witty, elusive piece, 'Plato's Chair'.

Because of the diversity of the work, it wasn't possible to pinpoint common concerns. Broadly, there was a division between those performers who used themselves as a directly creative source and those who devised a scenario in which they featured. Sarah Edge, for instance, stepped in and out of her 'Mine or His-tory' where the score demanded. Silvia Ziranek and Rose English made more demands on themselves, using the range of their own personalities and perceptions in a rich and constantly changing way. There is no question which was the more challenging work.

As with all areas of the arts, the most successful pieces were those that had gone through a process of maturing or digestion and had ended up with a wholly illusory sense of simplicity. Not surprisingly, technology proved as much a pitfall as a blessing. Slides, film, tape offer a blinding range of effects that in some cases would have been better treated with more caution. Tara Babel (Tower of Babel?) had enough material and enough images in her 'Give Him Plenty of Coffee' — a view of Lorca, Spain, fascism, 'the many manifestations of life and death' — to provide a string of performance art pieces. An ambitious work, it tended to state rather than develop, a not uncommon fault.

M. Blöb's 'Transformation' was, on the other hand, a masterpiece of restraint and precision. There was nothing in the darkened acting area except a long table covered with a crisp white cloth. On it were a glass vase of chrysanthemums, a platter, a chopping block and some kitchen knives. Blöb enters, a stringy bespectacled nondescript man and methodically gets into his chef's whites. He studies the flowers and then proceeds with great meticulousness to chop them up until a shredded mass of heavy-smelling red-yellow is piled on the platter. Next he carefully crushes the vase into glittering shards and arranges them around the flowers. This done, he divests himself and departs. Why was this simple composition so absorbing? Initially there was the visual impact of the crisply lit table, a bit like those 17th-century Dutch still lives of fruit and napery: both real and unreal. Then came the faint sense of danger (knives, glass) and the wonder at the slow change from one shape to another. Underlying was the contrast, too, between the visual beauty of the dish and the lethal effect its consumption would have. Blöb contained all those sensations in one highly controlled piece and left you with your senses tingling.

The sadness of the Showcase was the bleakness ahead for most of the participants. The new younger artists will undoubtedly learn from the experience — but where will they show their next steps? Not at Nottingham. La Frenais and Ziranek were appalled at the number of better-known artists applying this year, a direct reflection of lack of outlets. But Nottingham is not for them. Where, then, is?

The question of outlets is a major one for Performance Art. In America, where Philip Glass and Laurie Anderson are not tagged as difficult minority tastes, things are easier. 'Can Performance be Popular?' asked the coat-trailing debate that weekend. With La Frenais on one side ('Art should be seen in its proper context, not as an excuse for an evening out') and the tall, crumpled Neil Butler, founder of Brighton's innovative Zap Club on the other, honours were about even. But it must be initiatives like Butler's that will provide a way out for the beleaguered world of Performance Art. His Zap Club is not a gallery and not an art venue. It's a snappy club with cabaret, music, disco, videos. And, in the midst, they cunningly slip in Performance Art. The move into the market place can't be bad and, who knows, could confound performance artists themselves. The popular does not need to be trashy, the difficult not necessarily the rejected. □

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TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Kinks

THE TIMING was perfect. No sooner had that cold front given us our first taste of winter last week than the warm front of **Hi-de-Hi** (BBC-1) (heavily wired and padded) swept us back to those eternal summers before the century finally went off in — was it? — 1962.

The first of a new series delivered its warm glow merely by assuring us that all the old characters, bar one, would be on parade as usual: Yvonne and Barry bickering double-meaningfully as Yvonne's ballgowns are unloaded, Gladys devastated by the news of Jeffrey's departure for Canada, Ted making a doomed bid for power and Peggy liaising between the various pairs. All present and correct.

The departure up-market of the bashful, lop-sided Jeffrey Fairbrother is potentially dangerous for the series. Who could possibly replace him in our affections, let alone Gladys's?

Jimmy Perry and David Croft — the original writers have kept their claws on this one, thank God — are clearly relishing the suspense because they are keeping us waiting till next week to find out. A preview in *TV Times* reveals one 'Clive Dempster', a wolfish RAF type in blazer and MG. Now what are we to make of that? Gladys will fancy him, of course, but what can he do about it if sexual intercourse only began in 1963 and this is 1961?

Take-me-back shows like **Hi-de-Hi** don't even have to be funny to make you feel younger and happier than you were before, and worse when the clapped-out form of **Dynasty** (BBC-1) drags itself forward immediately afterwards like your own worst fears for the world.

RAY DAVIES's first film, **Return to Waterloo** (C4), was like one of those quickie, satirical jokes celebrities used to make in the Sixties using their pop friends and lots of ill-advised last-minute spontaneity and drugs. This one is an updated version of *The Magical Mystery Tour,* brand leader of the genre: a frustrated middle-class suburban rapist and victim of the incest gap reviews his life and prejudices on board a commuter train bound for his 'Waterloo' in the hands of the police. We see Davies busking in the underground as the rapist's runaway teenage daughter walks past him listening to something else on her Walkman — The Pretenders perhaps? 'Somehow I feel the world's been passing me by / Somehow I feel I've been living a lie . . . jus' wanna be free,' sings Davies, having one more go at exploding his unassailable reputation as a songwriter. 'Now you've made a reputation/ there's so much that you can lose.'

The message of the movie, for it is nothing if not pointsome, is that the system makes rapists of us all. (The chocolate machine gets jammed.) 'Be good to us and we'll be good to you. / The system will reward you because we understand . . .' Before the film meets its Waterloo, Davies the film-maker has run amok with the special effects. The rapist smashes some scapegoat punks who turn out to be window dummies, who turn out to be punks, who turn out to be still sitting there playing their ghetto-blaster while commuters do a soft shoe outside on the platform. The film just about keeps to the standards set by TV for this sort of video bash, but it was a million miles from its great original, Davies's superb song *Waterloo Sunset.*

The **Bullshitters** (C4) was another satirical knees-up, the germ of which first appeared on Keith Allen's *Whatever You Want* last year. Allen has got it in for *The Professionals*, which is nice, and he does an hysterical send-up of the conventions governing TV cop-shows. 'Bonehead' and 'Foyle' have been kicked out of the Service for their involvement in a Russian Gay Serum plot, but they have to be recalled when 'Cmdr Jackson's' daughter is kidnapped by a couple of 'peculiar' pub entertainers whose dream is to launch her in an alternative black leisure — or was it 'leather'? — complex called *The Wang*. Will Fiona become just another stain on the casting couch? Almost certainly, if Allen has anything to do with it: 'For the TV tough-guy the motor car is his mistress, girlfriend and lover,' he tells his students at RADA. 'Now. I've got to get into the car, what don't I do, Paul? Look at the door handle, thank-you.'

The funniest part was when they were doing the panicky running-about stuff and falling off buses wearing nothing but leather jackets, cowboy boots and red posing pouches, but you started to hear the wheels turning a bit when they had to be in love with each other: 'Foyle, I really respect you. Not just as a Secret Service Agent, but as a man. I love you, Foyle.'

'I nearly always have my cheek next to hers,' said the wizened 'Little Billy' in *Gigolos*, a jolly piece of prurience from **Forty Minutes** (BBC-2). 'I would lean right forward and just kiss my partner, especially during the Telemark.' I thought the Telemark was a kind of pre-war ski-turn involving a sudden kicking movement, but Little Billy must have known what he was doing because he was saving up for his own dancehall, The Empress, outside Rochdale.

Next on was the ludicrous 'Giovanni', who had 200 ties and 70 pairs of shoes 'because women start to look at you at the shoes'. Like all Italians, Giovanni was taught to be a gigolo by his mother, when he was six: 'My first white suit was made by two white sheets by my mother.'

I enjoyed the picture of his parents sleeping rough in order to put little Giovanni on the streets, but Giovanni was the last of his profession, he thought: 'The change came with the war. They don't care any more. They are in business . . .' Well, it's a state of affairs we all deplore, but you can't put back the clock, eh Giovanni?

As it turned out, he was wrong. The game is alive and kicking, as proved by young Philip, an Anglo-Chilean foot-fetishist who has been to bed with 'well under 500 women' in his time, but doesn't like Anglo-Saxon ones because 'they don't take care of their feet and I happen to be a person who gets great pleasure from feet.' □

Weekend competition

No 2847 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Ever wanted to be an MP? Write a letter to a loyal party chairman in which you outline the outstanding views, qualities, experience, etc, that make you an exemplary Thatcherite Tory, Jenkinish SDP-ite or whatever. Max. 150 words by 21 November.

No 2844 **Set by Nina Watkins**

Titles and blurbs for books as unlikely as the recent *Jane Austen and the French Revolution.*

Report **By Babe Bio**

Wat a letdown. Wat a diserpointment. Wat a (Ive lookt this one up) disenchantment. First time threw I just read yore tittles and neerly wet myself larghing (*Anthony Buckeridge and Feminism, Enid Blyton and the Nuclear Debate, Mahatma Gandhi and Haute Couture*) but then I went back to look at the blerbs and most of them were perthetic — snaching at straws like 'previously unpublished correspondence', etc, etc; sinking into kwogmires of jiberish and jenrally getting the nikkers in a rite old twist. Overambishers, if you want my opingnon. A tenner to the two who staid the corse.

Ronnie Reagan and the Nietzschean Weltanschauung

President Reagan has never been a man to wear his intellect on his sleeve. In fact, so keen is his actor's delight in playing plain dumb that the power and penetration of that intellect is, even today, almost totally unacknowledged. This book redresses that invidious image. Compiled by former Hollywood stuntman Gus Nietzsche (the philosopher's fourth cousin, thrice removed), it recreates his many ontological ding-dongs with the future President in the 'Forties and 'Fifties when, like all film-actors, they had little to do but sit around on the lot waiting for the cameras to roll. It was, so the author claims, Ronnie Reagan's acceptance of the transcendence of the Will, and the consequent realisation that he too was Superman that first made him run for office. Among the book's many insights is the revelation that the President's favourite riposte 'There you go again!' (used so devastatingly against both Mondale and Carter) is no mere debating gambit, but a typically arcane allusion to the Nietzschean Theory of Eternal Recurrence.

MARTIN FAGG

Logical Positivism in English Football

It is well known that the philosopher A.J. Ayer was deeply interested in association football. It is surprising, therefore, that the influence of his ideas on the game has never before been studied. In this remarkable book the author establishes that, through the medium of Alf Ramsey, logical positivism was largely responsible for England's victory in the 1966 World Cup.

Although the two never met, Ayer's influence is clear. Even at Ipswich, Ramsey's post-match taciturnity demonstrated his awareness that conventional football statements ('If only Perkins had not been injured. . .') are formally non-verifiable propositions. By 1966, as the author shows, metaphysical discussion was virtually unknown in the England dressing-room.

In a brilliant final chapter, the author argues that it was Ramsey's analysis of the semantic confusion and self-contradiction implicit in such terms as 'centre half' which led to the final abandonment of the 5-3-2 formation.

NOEL PETTY

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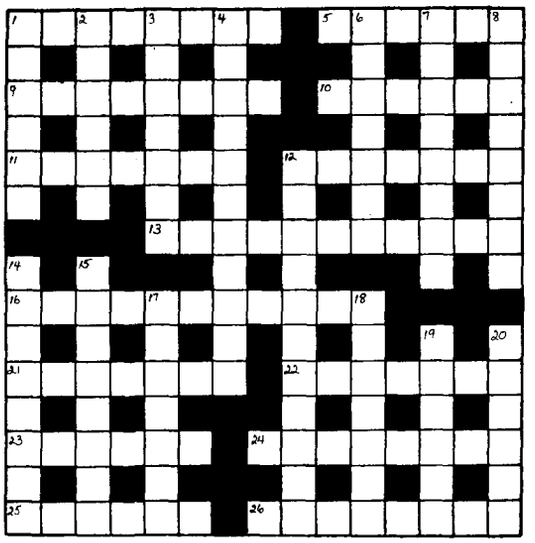
Weekend Crossword 1459

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1459, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 20 November.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

ACROSS

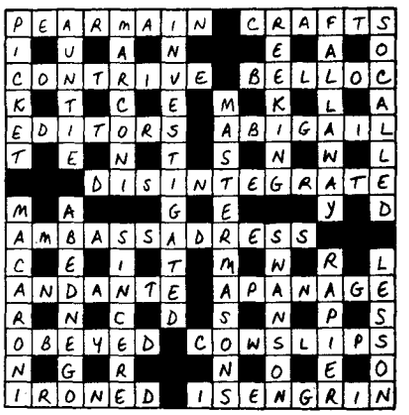
1. Causes trouble by putting district ahead of city (8)
5. Fretted because the country is without iron (6)
9. Living proof that the twain do sometimes meet? (8)
10. Go through the air, getting a six to point? (6)
11. Ruler gets on in time (7)
12. Garment which shows it back to front in the glass (7)
13. Succeeded without a poem to make love as a symbol of defeat (6,5)
16. Live with a word cheat as a newspaper proprietor (11)
21. More pungent place in Africa (7)
22. Place which puts a woman in credit (7)
23. Hang about for it in a fresh role (6)
24. Means of communication which keeps the West calm? (8)
25. The workers would be sure confused without this paper (6)
26. Fed during breaks, sets out again (8)

DOWN

1. Read about writing in unconscious states (6)
2. The garment for a man in a depression (6)
3. Release when the sun appears hazy to the sailors (7)
4. Sandy-haired loafer by the sea? (11)
6. A vehicle inside contains cigars (7)
7. For Latin translation this press is needed (8)
8. Preparation for dinner in two senses (8)
12. Anticipate making an unfamiliar novice creep (11)
14. Plant which shows a sign of hesitation when followed by a wild lion (8)
15. The livelier loosen up when there is drink about (8)
17. Effeminate but heroic direction (7)
18. The greatest fans see Kent collapse (7)
19. Most unusual feature of good destroying evil (6)
20. Give credit to goddess in dificult situation (6)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1458



Prizewinners to 1458

John Hammond (Plumtree, S. Notts.)
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APPOINTMENTS

SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

The General Council of the STUC invites applications from persons of suitable qualification and trades union background for the post of

GENERAL SECRETARY

The position carries appropriate salary, holidays and superannuation benefits. The successful applicant will be required to take up office towards the end of 1985. It is intended, however, that ratification of the appointment will be made at the April 1985 Annual Congress.

Applicants should write in the first instance for CV Form and Details of Post to — **Mrs R. McDonald, Administrative Officer, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Middleton House, 16 Woodlands Terrace, Glasgow G3 6DF.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN UNIT

The Local Government Campaign Unit has been created as a focal point for the defence of local government services. The Unit is based in London with a permanent staff of 14, and is funded by a number of local authorities and trade unions.

Senior Information Officer/ Deputy Director

Starting Salary Circa £16,000 pa inclusive

A Senior Information Officer is required to head a small team of information and research staff, providing an information service for the Unit and its members.

The job will involve liaison with a wide range of other organisations concerned with the problems facing local government. The person appointed will be expected to take full responsibility for the Unit as a whole in the absence of the Director.

Previous experience in the information field and a commitment to working as part of a team are essential. Previous experience of local government is desirable.

Research Officer

Starting Salary Circa £15,500 pa inclusive

The Research Officer will work as part of the Research and Information team to undertake research and data collection on the need for and provision of local government services in order to contribute towards the development and furtherance of the Unit's policies and strategies. An understanding of local government finance is preferable.

For further information about either post, please write or telephone the Local Government Campaign Unit at the address below.

Written applications to be received by the Director by Friday 23 November 1984.

Assistant Administrative Officer

Starting Salary Circa £9,500 inclusive

An Assistant Administrative Officer is required to assist with the provision of an effective administrative service to the Unit, with an emphasis on the day to day running of the administrative systems and procedures.

The person appointed will work as part of a team of four administrative staff and duties will include the administration of petty cash and bookkeeping systems, use of a word processor (training will be given), preparation of material for Management Committee meetings, and other administrative tasks as required by the Administrative Officer.

An ability to work under pressure is essential.

For further information and an application form please write or telephone the Local Government Campaign Unit at the address below.

Closing date for applications Friday 23 Nov. 1984. Local Government Campaign Unit, 3rd Floor, Mary Ward House, 5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SS 01-387-9893

LONDON CENTRE FOR TRANSPORT PLANNING

The Centre wants an imaginative and energetic **RESEARCH WORKER.**

The work involves research on urban transport problems in London; advice to the public on transport issues; writing articles for the house journal and the production of papers. Qualifications in planning, transport planning or economics would be an advantage.

Salary **£8,500**. *We are an equal pay organisation.*

Ring **01-928 1440** for details and application form.

Closing date: **26 November 1984.**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians has a vacancy for an Administrative Assistant working jointly for the Research and Organisation Department and the National Officer dealing with the public sector negotiations. This post would provide an ideal opening for a committed person seeking employment with a trade union.

The salary will be £7,500 p.a. inclusive.

Applications, addressed to the **General Secretary, UCATT, UCATT House, 177 Abbeville Road, London SW4 9RL** should contain full details of education, work and trade union experience, together with the names of two referees.

Applications should be received by Friday 30 November 1984.

Researcher

"Getting On"

Our television series "Getting On" has established a high reputation for its presentation of issues affecting older people.

To assist with the preparation of future programmes, we need a specialist Researcher – someone with a genuine concern for promoting the needs and activities of pensioners. An authoritative knowledge of medical and social issues is **essential.** A proven ability as a writer is required.

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CENTRAL

SOUTHWARK TRADES COUNCIL needs a Temporary (1 year) Campaign Worker against cuts and privatisation. To work with local hospital trade unionists/health campaigns in the two Health Districts covering Southwark. Trade Union experience, preferably in health service, essential. Based at the Southwark Trade Union Support Unit. Salary approx. £10,300 (SO1 comparable local government conditions). Send CV, reasons for applying, etc to Southwark Trades Council, 42 Braganza St, London SE17 3RJ. Closing date Monday, 19 November. Southwark Trades Council is an Equal Opportunity employer.

THERAPY

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For prospectus and application form, contact:

The Secretary, Postgraduate School of Applied Social Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP.

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Psychologists and general practitioners, Consultative work with general practice teams, The future of the psychiatric nurse therapist in the community

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 16 JAN 1985 Resource Questions And Answers
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- **Renee Short MP,** *Chair, House of Commons Social Services Committee*
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- **Don Braisby,** *Liaison Officer, Health and Social Services, Camden*
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- **Ron Lacey,** *Assistant Director (Campaigns), MIND*
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- **Stuart Etherington,** *Director, Good Practices in Mental Health*
- **Rolf Olsen,** *Professor of Social Work, University of Birmingham*

£24 per day, £60 all three days — fees include cost of workshops & refreshments, but not lunch

Applications/bookings: The Conference Secretary, MIND, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED, 01-637 0741

MIND

LISTINGS

FRI 9 NOV

LONDON 'Where Next for the Miners?' Meeting & Rally 6pm Congress House, Gt. Russell St, WC1. Spkrs. Peter Heathfield, Ken Reid (TGWU), Les Elliot (AUEW). **Org. TUC SE Regional Cncl.**

LONDON 'Sonido de Londres' & 'Foreign Exchange' in concert for El Salvador. 8pm LSE Haldane Rms, Houghton St, WC2. Tickets £3/£2 UB40 ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, N1/LSE union shop. **Details: Duncan Green/Rachel Urbach 01-359 3976.**

SAT 10 NOV

LONDON Peace Pledge Union Silent Vigils opposite Royal Albert Hall 1.30pm-2.30pm & 5.30pm-7.15pm by torchlight while audience arrive for 2 military festivals of Remembrance.

BURY Rally called by Miners' Support Cttee. 1pm Town Centre Spkrs incl. Barbara Castle MEP. **Details: Dave Parrish 061-705 1034/761 7584 work.**

UXBRIDGE Trade Unions & CND day school org. by Hillingdon CND 9.30am-5pm Academy Rm, Brunel Students Union, Cleveland Rd, Middx. **Details: Val Frost, 334 Balmoral Dr, Hayes, Middx.**

HARRINGEY Evening for the Miners 8pm Community & Trade Union Centre, 2a Brabant Rd, Wood Green, N22. Live music, disco, late bar. Adm. £2/£1 UB40. **Details: 01-881 1196.**

UXBRIDGE Public Seminar for Armistice Wkend org. by Hillingdon Peace Council 10am-5pm Brunel University. Adm. £2/£1 UB40. **Details: Iver 653931/Ruislip 30631/ 01-573 2963.**

SUN 11 NOV

LONDON Racism in the health services conf. 10am-4pm Ethnic Minorities Multi-purpose Resource Centre, 5 Westminster Br. Rd, SE1. Creche/signer **Details: Joan Miller, GLC Women's Cttee 01-633 8543.**

LONDON Peace Pledge Union Wreath of White Poppies. Assemble 1.45pm St. Martin-in-the-Fields march in silent procession to Cenotaph.

HIGHGATE CND Cherry Tree planting by Mayor of Haringey 2pm Garden in Archway Rd opp. Woodman Pub.

MON 12 NOV

WEST THURROCK Mass demo. in support of the miners called by Kent NUM/TUC SE Regional Cncl. Coaches from County Hall (Belvedere Rd) SE1 6am; Kings Cross (York Way) 6am; Stratford Broadway (Town Hall) 6.30am. **Bkings: Mick Gavan 01-981 6515.**

TUES 13 NOV

LONDON Church & the Bomb study session with *Bishop of Salisbury and Rabbi* Friedlander 8.30pm Hillel House, 1/2 Endsleigh St, WC1. Adm. £1.50/£1 membs, UB40. **Details: JONAH (Jews organised for a Nuclear Arms Halt), 21 Edmunds Walk, N2.**

LONDON 'What can the Health Groups do next?' Spkr. Michael Silver. 7pm Marlborough Arms, 36 Torrington Pl, WC1. **Org. Politics of Health Grp.**

WED 14 NOV

BELSIZE PARK 'Is rate capping good for you?' Phil Turner, leader Camden Council 8pm St. Peter's Church Hall, Belsize Sq, NW3. **Org. Belsize Brnch. Labour Party.**

WALLINGTON 'Is there a way to Peace?' debate between Canon Paul Oestreicher, CND & Prof. Lawrence Freedman, Prof. War Studies Kings Coll. London. 8pm Wallington Public Hall. Adm. Free. **Org. Sutton CND**

THURS 15 NOV

HIGHGATE 'Nuclear Winter' Spkr. Tony Hart, GLC 8pm The Parlour Rm. Jacksons La. Community Centre. **Org Highgate CND.**

FRI 16 NOV

LONDON Benefit for the Miners' Wives. Spkrs, videos, creche, wheelchairs. 7.30pm Tolmers Sq. Community Centre, Foundry Mews, NW1.

SAT 17 NOV

MANCHESTER North West Womens *Solidarity with the Miners Conference.* Manchester Town Hall, Lord Mayors Parlour. **Details/free registration Cath. Potter, 93 Ewan St, Gorton, Manchester 18. 061-223 4470.**

LONDON 'Civil Liberties & the Nuclear State' Conf. Register 9.30-10am, ends 5pm County Hall, SE1. Adm. £2.50/50p UB40. **Org. Lawyers for Nuclear Disarmament, 2 Garden Ct. Temple EC4.**

HIGHGATE CND Book Sale 11am-4pm Jacksons La. Community Centre. Adm. 10p. All books urgently needed: **Sandra McGowan, 82 Constantine Rd, NW3.**

WIMBLEDON Labour Party Anti-Racist day 12.30pm *William Morris Hall*, 267 The Broadway, SW19. Adm. 50p/free creche. **Details: Stephen Moss 01-402 2989.**

MANCHESTER 'The portrayal of women in the media' one-day conf. Manchester Town Hall, Spkrs. incl. Brenda Dean, Gen. Pres. SOGAT. Adm. £1. **Details: 01-431 7218/01-228 2809 day.**

LONDON Chile Cttee. for Human Rights Annual Forum on Chile. 11am-5.30pm Africa Centre, 38 Kings St, WC2. Workshops, video, spkrs incl. membs of recent Labour Movement delegation to Chile. Lunch available. Adm. Free. **Details: 266 Pentonville Rd, N1. 01-837 7561.**

BRIGHTON British Society for Social Responsibility in Science annual conf. 'Who Controls tomorrow's World?'. Sussex University. Adm. £6/£2 UB40, students/£8 non-membs. Disabled facilities, creche. **Details: 0173 21782.**

SUN 18 NOV

LONDON Anti-Irish Racism, a consultative Conf. for London. 10am Intro. by Ken Livingstone — 6pm Brent Irish Centre, 76-82 Salusbury Rd, NW6. Access for disabled, creche. Evening Social. £2/50p UB40. Apply to Irish Interest Grp at above address.

FORTHCOMING

22 NOV BALHAM RVA present 'Development or Exploitation — British aid to Philippines' panel discn. with Alf Dubs MP. 8pm Balham Social Hall, Balham New Road, SW12. Adm Free.

2 DEC CROYDON 'Women in Action' Croydon TU Cncl. Women's Conf. 10am-2pm Ruskin Hs, Coombe Rd, Croydon, Sy. ***Details: Alison, Anne, Hilary 01-686 0796.***

4 DEC LONDON 'Licensing Law & Health' day conf. Kings Fund Centre, NW1. **Details: Action on Alcohol Abuse, 26 Craven St, WC2. 01-839 7344.**

10 DEC LONDON 'Law & International Relations' — report on Haldane Soc. of Socialist Lawyers recent international work. 7pm LSE, Rm. SO12. Houghton St, WC2. Adm. 50p non-membs.

11 DEC LONDON 'An investigation into the quality aspects of 1981 Census for England & Wales' by M. Britton, F. Birch (OPCS) 5pm Manson Theatre, London Sch. of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel St, Adm. Free. **Details: Denise Lievesley, SCPR, 35 Northampton Sq, EC1V 0AX. 01-250 1866.**

13 DEC LONDON Social Research Association Annual Conference Kensington & Chelsea Town Hall. Key note speech by Prof. A. H. Halsey on 'Social Science & Government'. **Details: Mike Cooke, SRA 01-240 8551.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF LABOUR HISTORY

The Old Limehouse Town Hall,
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AGM, SATURDAY 17 NOV. 1984
Morning Session 10 a.m.—12.30 p.m.
Members only
Afternoon Session 2pm—open session

MICHAEL FOOT
Speaks on
'THE RADICAL TRADITION'
For further details ring **01-515 3229**

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF LABOUR HISTORY

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 11 Nov. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Reincarnation & Karma', Wed. 14 Nov. 7.30 p.m. Commemoration 'The Theosophical Movement'. United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The 1984 Creighton Lecture entitled: 'The Nature of Japanese Imperialism' will be given by Professor W.G. Beasley (Emeritus Professor of the History of the Far East, University of London) at 5.30 p.m. on Monday 19 November 1984 at the University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Admission free, without ticket.

CONFERENCE

EAST AFRICA: FUTURES 23-24 Nov. Major *Conference on social, economic & political* developments. Commonwealth Institute 01-603 4535 ext. 267.

HEARTSEARCH

ANGLO-ASIAN, but assimilated, 32, graduate, professional, presentable, slim, stable, seeks masculine, active, presentable friend, 35-55. Interests: travel, music, cinema, health, current affairs etc. Box 9647.

APPEAL FOR appealing young/youngish discriminating lady (medium/small stature), cultural interests, no ties. Invited by equivalent, but older presentable male writer, to contemplate sharing attractive country home near Chilterns. Request photographs exchanged. Box 9631.

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE teacher, (40), seeks lively socialist male company, for skiing holiday Christmas/Easter. Box 9616.

ATTRACTIVE, VIVACIOUS Celt, in her 40s, seeks warm, tender man, 45-55, for love, laughter, celebration. North London. Must be mobile for relationship to develop. Box 9644.

AUSTRIAN BORN professional man, English education, early middle-age, wishes to meet young lady, interested in languages and philosophy. Box 9632.

BACHELOR RADIO Producer, 39, attractive, intelligent, cultured and sensual, seeks lady with similar qualities for loving, caring, stimulating relationship. Telephone, photo appreciated. London. Box 9633.

BIRMINGHAM: mature student, lively 38, humorous, no Burt (yak) Reynolds. Seeks female, 18-40, for love, fun, laughs. Casual basis. Non-political or smoker. Box 9650.

BLACK GENTLEMAN, student, 26, quiet and shy, non-smoker. Seeks compatible female for *intimate and permanent relationship.* Box 9584.

CONTINENTAL BORN divorcee, 44, fairly ordinary, quietish, reasonably happy, usual cultural interests, enjoys hill/coastal walking, cycling, travelling, food, seeks considerate, unattached man for companionship. West London. Box 9635.

COUPLE 30s, bored with coupledom, seek widen circle, share myriad interests, hedonistic & serious pursuits, enduring friendships, mutual support, o.n.o. All true individuals welcome. ALA. Box 9656.

CREATIVE? POSSESSING vitality? Warm, perceptive woman, personable and intelligent, seeks man (35+) to share wide interests and enjoy stimulating, caring, fun-filled relationship. York region. Box 9617.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

DELIGHTFUL LADY 39, one child, seeks unattached male, 30s or 40s, preferably W. Yorks area, interested in arts, walking, theatre, CND, for friendship. Box 9667.

DIVORCED LECTURER, early 50s, wishes to encounter slim, attractive female with no ties. Age unimportant but engaging, caring personality vital. All replies answered. Box 9638.

DOES A woman in Scotland want a physically beautiful, left-wing male scientist, 30s. Order of interests: knowledge, politics, sex, exercise, travel. Likes children. Box 9636.

FEMALE GRADUATE, 31, London, boyfriend gone, stable, warm, lively, straightforward, socialist, urban/rural, intellectual/grassroots interests, seeks similar male. Photo? New female friends welcome. Box 9504.

FEMALE 30, warm, good-humoured, lively, interested in theatre, music, travel, bookish, seeks man to share interests and brighten winter gloom. Box 9614.

FILM ADDICT, male, 20, leftish, loves forties music, classic novels, US comics, Hitchcock, 'Gone With The Wind' and Doris Day, seeks female equivalent. Box 9615.

GAY PROFESSIONAL offers Oriental or African, 21-30, exicitng prospects in managerial agriculture, linked to a loyal personal relationship. Must be genuine. Box 9575.

HELLO! WHICH man out there wants to share theatre, arts, wining/dining, classical music, with attractive, professional London woman, mid-40s. Who's willing to chance it? Box 9511.

INTELLIGENT, CARING, cultured, humorous, leftist, literary, lively man, 40, Asian origins, would like to meet lady with literary interests. All letters answered. Box 9618.

INTELLIGENT, MATURE STUDENT
South London, 30, seeks attractive, leftist female for friendship, perhaps romance. Interests include cinema, literature, politics. Letter and photo appreciated.
Box 9642

JOURNALIST, MALE, 62, hale (not hearty), Oxbridge pseudo-intellectual, SDP, separated, domesticated, loves hill walking, reading, classical music, talking, seeks companionship of lady of similarish attributes. SE London. Box 9611.

KIDDERMINSTER (WORCESTERSHIRE) AREA:
widower, late 50s, interests include: German language and song, classical and light music, the occasional drink, gardening and nature, warm, friendly, presentable, seeks lady, young 50s, whose interests and inclinations coincide, for friendship.
Box 9654

LEFT-WING BACHELOR, aged 27, values kindness, seeks like-minded lady, aged 20-35, living in Gwent/Cardiff/Bristol, for friendship and companionship. Box 9579.

LONDON MALE, 27, slim, fit, graduate, East-Ender. Likes films, restaurants, books etc., now finds himself alone, seeks female to help keep the cold dark nights at bay. Box 9620.

LONELY, SHY socialist man, 33, Birmingham, into politics, wandering, travel and especially people, trying to put things back together, seeks female companion for sharing and caring. Box 9665.

MALE, YOUTHFUL 52, divorced, 5' 10", good appearance, solvent, likes swimming, dancing, camping, rambling, but equally happy with fireside chat. Seeks lady companion. London area. Box 9634.

MANCHESTER, MIDDLE-AGED author, wide interests (arts, hiking, local history, etc.) seeks active, non-smoking, undemanding companion. Box 9645.

MERRY DIVORCEE, 30s, enjoys: conversation, family life, gardening, films, plays, walking & pubs. Seeks: sensitive, mature man, 35+, with similar interests for joyful relationship. Cotswolds and surrounds. Box 9670.

MAN, EARLY FIFTIES,
usual mixture of good and bad but creative and civilised, missing warmth and affection in unsuccessful attachment, interested books, music, modern poetry, seeks bohemian, warm, gentle, life-hungry woman. No strings at first but who knows later? N. London, Herts, Bucks.
Box 9672

NEED NOVEMBER be the gloomiest month? Professional man, 49, usual cultural interests, totally uninterested sport, seeks independent minded woman of warmth, wit and discretion for civilized relationship. Herts./N. London Box 9674.

NON-SMOKING, INDEPENDENT, friendly man heartsearching for woman, to exchange my London weekends for your country pleasures. Box 9658.

ONE OF the few remaining master craftsmen, arguably the best sign & glasswriter in Europe, seeks lover/apprentice-skinny, youngish and a bit artistic! Box 9646.

OUTGOING, PROFESSIONAL woman, 42, seeks intelligent, genuine, male companion, with sense of humour to enjoy music, theatre, books, country walks. London/SE. Box 9637.

PERSONABLE LECTURER,
41, & his 2 yr-old daughter — who are tired of *living alone — seek a non-smoking, literate,* wine-drinking, female companion, willing to be part of a family set up. Single parents not excluded. N. Essex area.
Box 9655

PROFESSIONAL BUSINESSMAN, 49, divorced, non-intellectual, interests: walking, theatre, conversation. Seeks friendship and relationship with mature female. West Sussex area. Replies treated with confidence. Box 9628.

PROFESSIONAL GIRL, 34, single, slim, brunette, non-political, lost in North Staffordshire, seeks kind, caring, graduate male, non-smoker, similarly placed, for stable relationship. Box 9671.

SHY GIRL (22) wishes to share new found joie de vivre, eclectic cultural/musical life, inquisitiveness and anarchy, with imaginative and unusual boy. Box 9664.

RED FLAGS at 40 (who doesn't). West Kent *teacher needs female support to keep the* scarlet standard high, and avoid diversions of scarlet women, red wine, red roses and sunsets. On the other hand. . .Box 9612.

RIGHT-WING LAWYER, 24, bloated by fruits of repression and exploitation, seeks uninhibited female, 22-27, left-wing, to share his sickening complacency. London area. Photo completely unnecessary. Box 9643.

SOUTH HAMPSHIRE, female, 38, divorced, degreed, lively, happy, articulate, responsible, enlightened and attractive, looks for tall, well-educated, mature male, for mutually inspiring relationship. Box 9666.

SUCCESSFUL MAN, 34, invites woman God made — happy, intelligent, pleasant, humane, independent — to think, talk, feast, laugh, love together. London/South East. Box 9619.

TALL, SLIM, independent woman, late forties, professional job, interests in the arts, would like to meet easy-going, humorous man, with lively, open mind. Box 9659.

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, 30, Ph.D, author, like to meet a lady for relationship, marriage; likes classical music, countryside. Scotland based, Indian origin. Box 9613.

VERY MYOPIC male, Ametropic, 55, Anglophile, American, literate, lettered, travelled, unencumbered, seeks female with similar opthalmological malady for commiseration, mutuality, association, direction etc. Box 9372.

WARM, ATTRACTIVE, graduate woman teacher, div., 45, 5'5", brown hair, blue eyes, seeks professional man for friendship, companionship, and lasting close relationship. Interests: home-making, music, family-life, people. London. Box 9531.

62 YEAR-OLD, middle-aged man, wide interests, seeks lively-minded and lusty woman, for close companion'd hours (or days). London or Home Counties. Box 9559.

YORKSHIREMAN, young sixties, widower, slim, 5' 5", meatless, smokeless, womanless. Are you female, younger, lonely, unattached, slim, petite, intelligent, left-wing? Photo *appreciated and returned.* Box 9648.

YOUR AVERAGE 46 yrs-old female of average intelligence, interests and ability (but less than average mobility), wants to correspond with uncomplicated men, from the Other Island. Box 9602.

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